

BLACK DIAMOND
WESTERN

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NO. 57

BLACK



10¢

DIAMOND

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LEV GLEASON PUBLISHER AND EDITOR



AT LAST WE MEET,
SCORPION!

AN ILLUSTRATED
STORY BY
Myron Ross



WEB COMIC UNIVERSE.COM

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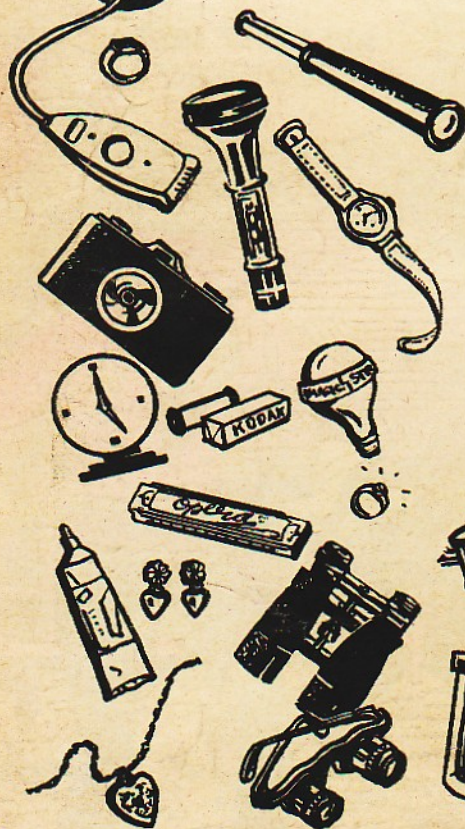
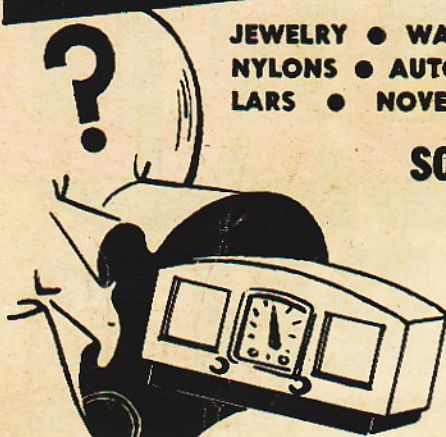
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MANY TIMES HAS BLACK DIAMOND SUSPECTED THAT SOME OF THE OUTLAWS HE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE WERE INCAPABLE OF PLANNING THE INTRICATE CRIMES THEY COMMITTED. HE FELT THAT A SINISTER MASTER-MIND WELL SCHOOLED IN WRONGDOING WAS BEHIND SOME OF THE SCHEMES? BUT NOW HE RIDES AGAIN AGAINST THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN THE WEST HAS EVER KNOWN, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT HIS EVERY MOVE IS RINGED IN THIS MASTER CRIMINAL'S GUNSIGHT? RIDE ALONG IN THIS DESPERATE BATTLE OF WITS AND ROARING GUNS WHEN

BLACK DIAMOND

MEETS THE

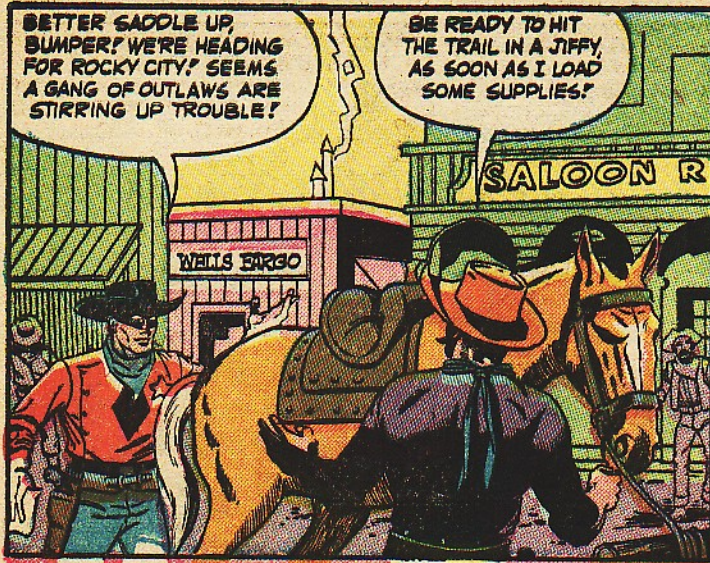
SCORPION

SO, BLACK DIAMOND
WE FINALLY MATCH
WITS AND **THIS**
TIME YOU'VE MET
YOUR MASTER?

AN
ILLUSTRATED
STORY
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HE'LL BE KILLED
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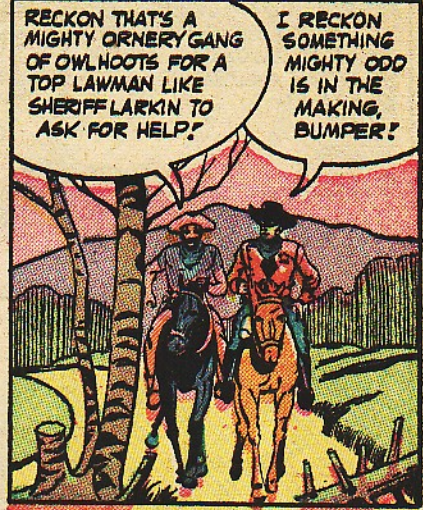




BETTER SADDLE UP, BUMPER! WE'RE HEADING FOR ROCKY CITY! SEEMS A GANG OF OUTLAWS ARE STIRRING UP TROUBLE!

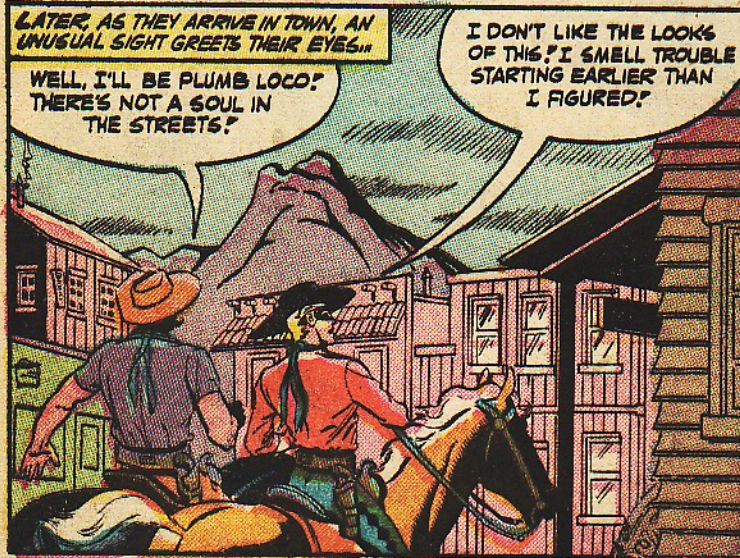
BE READY TO HIT THE TRAIL IN A JIFFY, AS SOON AS I LOAD SOME SUPPLIES!

MINUTES LATER, ALONG THE ROAD TO ROCKY CITY!!!



RECKON THAT'S A MIGHTY ORNERY GANG OF OWLHOOTS FOR A TOP LAWMAN LIKE SHERIFF LARKIN TO ASK FOR HELP!

I RECKON SOMETHING MIGHTY ODD IS IN THE MAKING, BUMPER!



LATER, AS THEY ARRIVE IN TOWN, AN UNUSUAL SIGHT GREETS THEIR EYES!!!

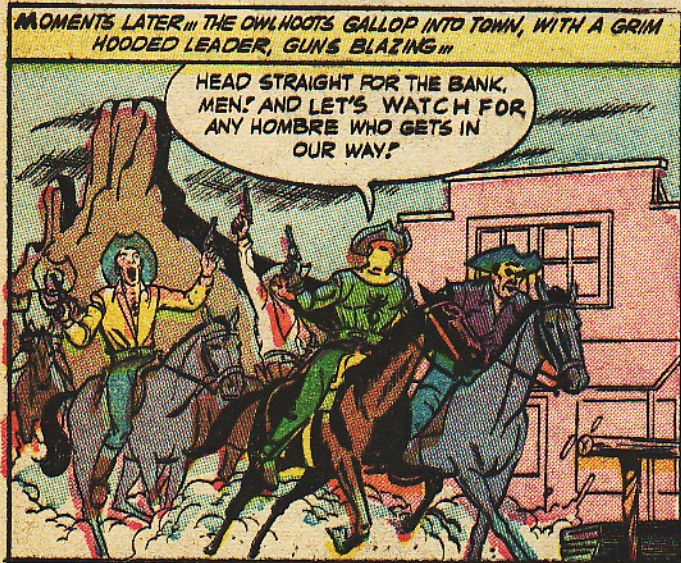
WELL, I'LL BE PLUMB LOCO! THERE'S NOT A SOUL IN THE STREETS?

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS! I SMELL TROUBLE STARTING EARLIER THAN I FIGURED!

SUDDENLY, SHERIFF LARKIN DARTS OUT OF A DOORWAY!!!

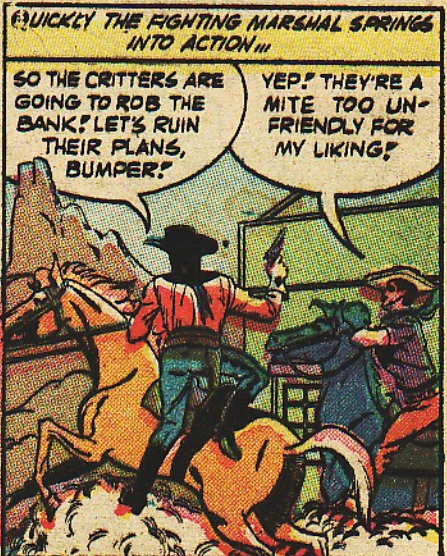


STAY OFF THE STREETS! THE SCORPION AND HIS GANG ARE COMIN'!



MOMENTS LATER!!! THE OWLHOOTS GALLOP INTO TOWN, WITH A GRIM HOODED LEADER, GUN'S BLAZING!!!

HEAD STRAIGHT FOR THE BANK, MEN! AND LET'S WATCH FOR ANY HOMBRE WHO GETS IN OUR WAY!

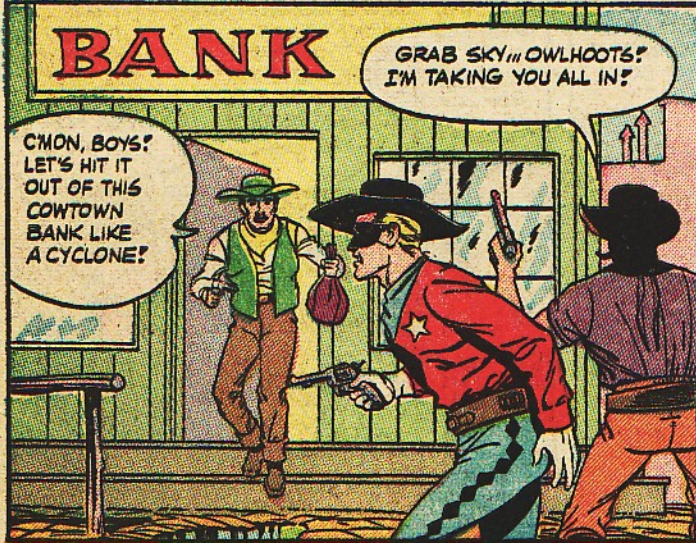


QUICKLY THE FIGHTING MARSHAL SPRINGS INTO ACTION!!!

SO THE CRITTERS ARE GOING TO ROB THE BANK! LET'S RUIN THEIR PLANS, BUMPER!

YEP! THEY'RE A MITE TOO UN-FRIENDLY FOR MY LIKING!

AS THE GUNMEN FOUR OUT OF THE BANK WITH THEIR BOOTY!!!



BANK

GRAB SKY!!! OWLHOOTS? I'M TAKING YOU ALL IN!

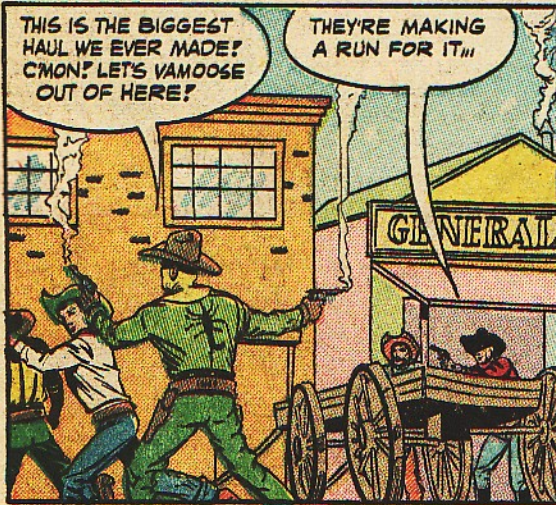
CMON, BOYS! LET'S HIT IT OUT OF THIS COWTOWN BANK LIKE A CYCLONE!

THE BLACK DIAMOND'S GUNS PLAY HAVOC WITH THE STARTLED OUTLAWS!!!



OWWW! HE'S FASTER'N GREASED LIGHTNIN'!

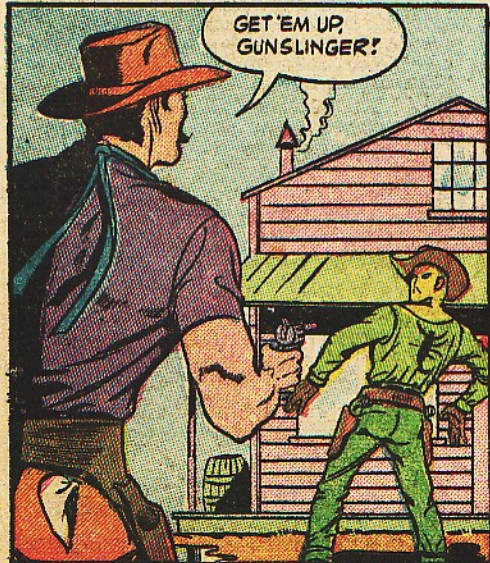
SWIFTLY, THE SCORPION TAKES COMMAND OF HIS FLEEING GANG!!!



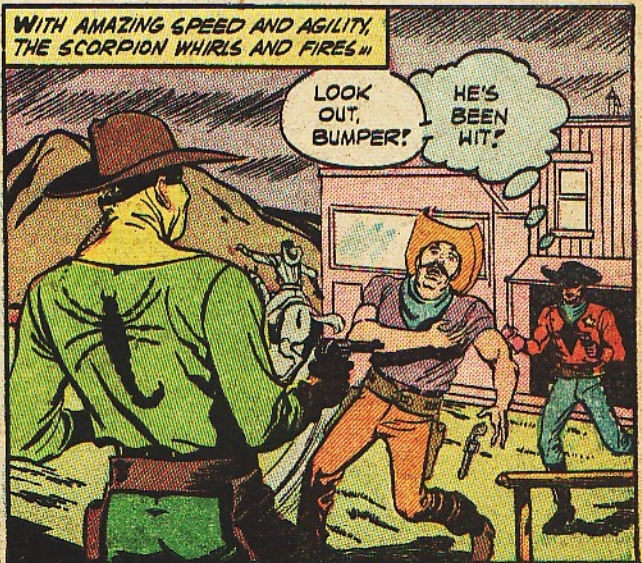
THIS IS THE BIGGEST HAUL WE EVER MADE! CMON! LET'S VAMOOSE OUT OF HERE!

THEY'RE MAKING A RUN FOR IT!!!

THOSE THIEVIN' CRITTERS WON'T GET AWAY! I'VE GOT THE DROP ON THEM!



GET 'EM UP, GUNSLINGER!



WITH AMAZING SPEED AND AGILITY, THE SCORPION WHIRLS AND FIRES!!!

LOOK OUT, BUMPER!

HE'S BEEN HIT!



GET AFTER THEM, DIAMOND? I'M OKAY! THE BULLET JUST CREASED ME!

THEY'LL HAVE TO WAIT! THAT SHOULDER LOOKS MIGHTY BAD! I'M GOING TO GET YOU TO THE DOC, PRONTO!

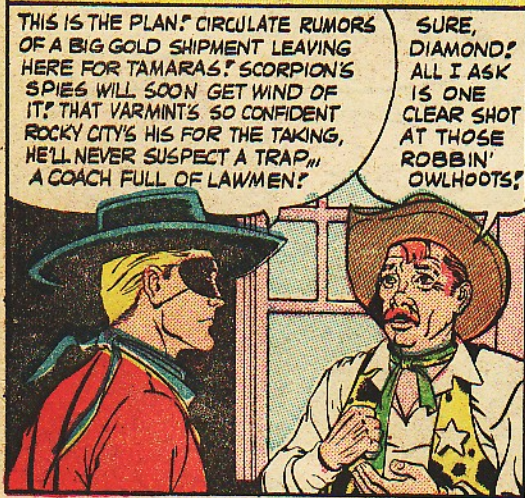


YOU'LL BE ALRIGHT, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO BE BEDDED UP FOR A SPELL TO REST THAT SHOULDER!

AW, HECK! THERE'S TOO MUCH WORK TO DO ROUNDING UP THOSE VARMINTS FOR ME TO LIE AROUND IN BED!

YOU CAN'T FIGHT WITH THAT WOUND BUMPER! I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE OVER FOR BOTH OF US!

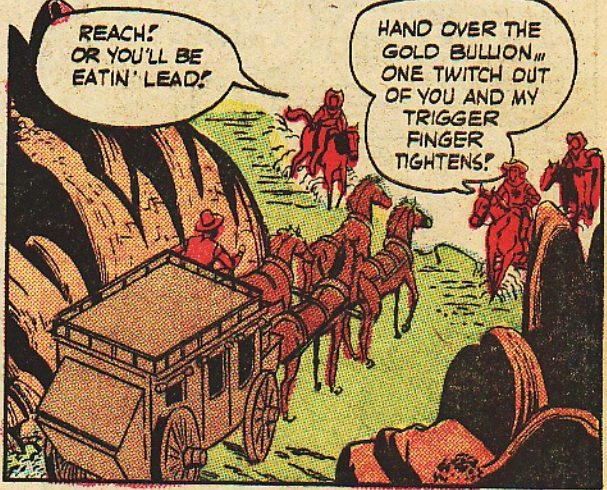
LATER, IN HIS OFFICE, SHERIFF LARKIN RECEIVES AN EXPECTED VISITOR!!!



THIS IS THE PLAN! CIRCULATE RUMORS OF A BIG GOLD SHIPMENT LEAVING HERE FOR TAMARAS! SCORPION'S SPIES WILL SOON GET WIND OF IT! THAT VARMINT'S SO CONFIDENT ROCKY CITY'S HIS FOR THE TAKING, HE'LL NEVER SUSPECT A TRAP! A COACH FULL OF LAWMEN!

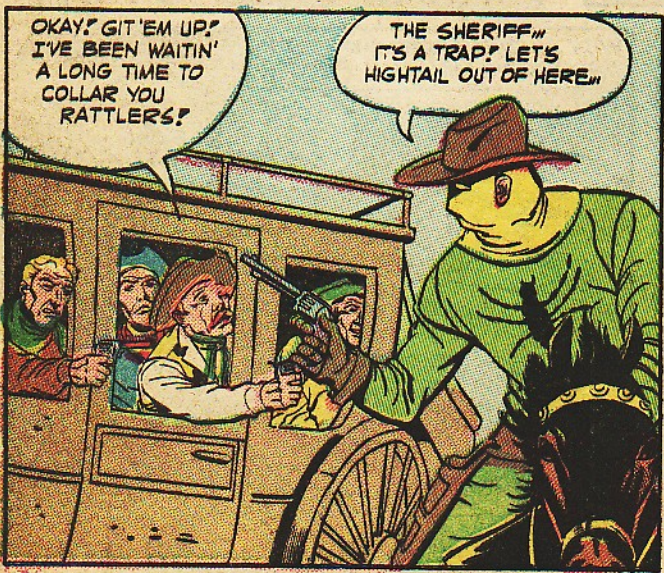
SURE, DIAMOND! ALL I ASK IS ONE CLEAR SHOT AT THOSE ROBBIN' OWLHOOTS!

A FEW DAYS LATER, A STAGECOACH RAMBLES IT'S WAY THROUGH NARROW CANYON PASS INTO A SCORPION'S NEST OF WAITING LEAD!!!



REACH! OR YOU'LL BE EATIN' LEAD!

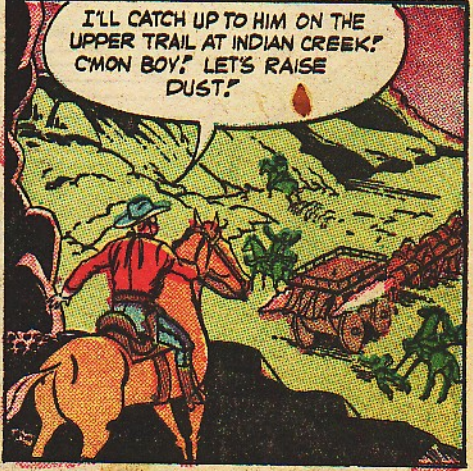
HAND OVER THE GOLD BULLION! ONE TWITCH OUT OF YOU AND MY TRIGGER FINGER TIGHTENS!



OKAY! GIT 'EM UP! I'VE BEEN WAITIN' A LONG TIME TO COLLAR YOU RATTLEERS!

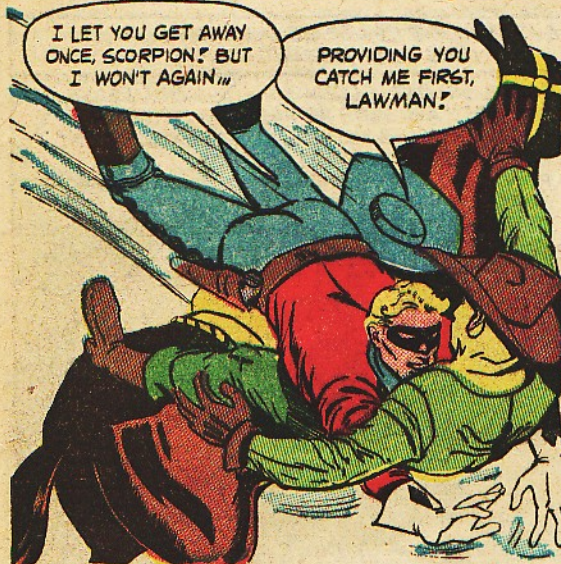
THE SHERIFF! IT'S A TRAP! LETS HIGHTAIL OUT OF HERE!!!

IN THE ENSUING BATTLE, MANY OF THE OWLHOOTS GO DOWN IN A BLAZE OF GUNFIRE! BUT AS THE SCORPION MANAGES TO GALLOP AWAY, KEEN EYES FOLLOW HIS EXIT!!!



I'LL CATCH UP TO HIM ON THE UPPER TRAIL AT INDIAN CREEK! C'MON BOY! LETS RAISE DUST!

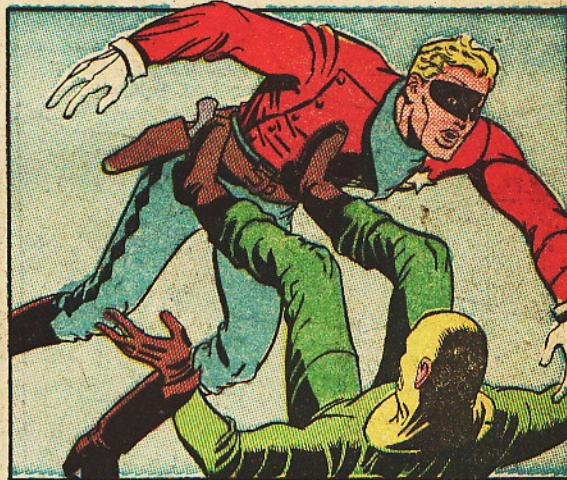
ON RELIAPON, HIS MIGHTY MOUNT, BLACK DIAMOND, THE FEARLESS MARSHAL, OUTRACES THE SCORPION, AND GRADUALLY CLOSES THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM? ON THE UPPER TRAIL, HORSE AND RIDER CATAPULT INTO THE AIR, BRACING THEMSELVES FOR A LEAP!!!



I LET YOU GET AWAY ONCE, SCORPION? BUT I WON'T AGAIN!!!

PROVIDING YOU CATCH ME FIRST, LAWMAN?

LIKE AN UNCOILING RATTLER, THE SCORPION EXPLODES INTO MOTION!!! HURLS HIMSELF ON HIS BACK, AND KICKS OUT HIS FEET LIKE PISTONS AT THE STARTLED MARSHAL!!!



DESPERATE MOMENTS PASS!!! AND THE STRUGGLING DUO HURTTLES TOWARD THE CLIFF'S EDGE!!!

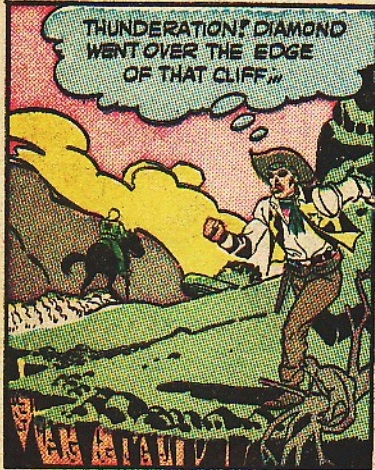
IN THE NEXT MOMENT!!! A DIRECT BLOW TO THE JAW STRIKES HOME!!! BLACK DIAMOND LOSES HIS FOOTING!!!



AND GOES OVER THE CRAG!!! A BREATHLESS DESCENT THROUGH SPACE!!!

THIS IS THE END OF THE TRAIL!!! FOR BLACK DIAMOND!

SHERIFF LARKIN, WHO WITNESSED THE DEADLY COMBAT, ARRIVES AT THE SCENE AS THE SCORPION GALLOPS AWAY!!!



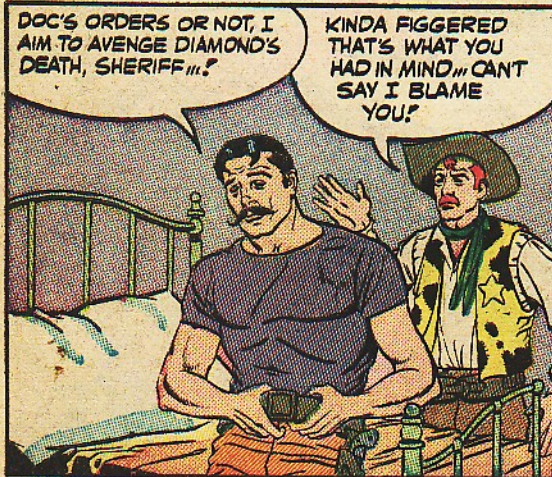
NOT A TRACE OF HIM!!! NOBODY COULD LIVE THROUGH THAT DROP!!!



I'D LIKE TO CHASE THAT MURDERIN' POLECAT, BUT I GUESS I'D BETTER HEAD INTO TOWN AND BREAK THE NEWS TO BUMPER!!! THAT!!! BLACK DIAMOND'S DEAD?!



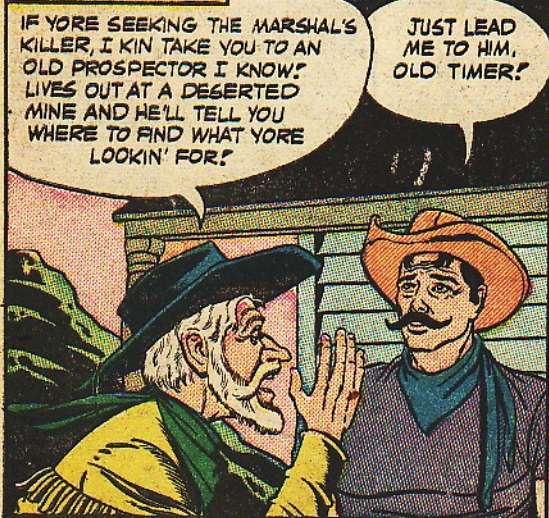
AT FIRST, BUMPER IS STUNNED AT THE SHERIFF'S ANNOUNCEMENT!!! THEN!!! WHITE HOT FURY GALVANIZES MOURNING INTO DETERMINED ACTION!!!



LATER, AT THE DESERTED MINE THE SCORPION USES AS A HIDEOUT!!!



BACK IN TOWN!!!



AT THE MINE!!!



BUT--INSTEAD OF AN INFORMANT, A FAMILIAR FOE EMERGES FROM THE DARKNESS TO ACCOST BUMPER...

THEN, SUDDENLY, FROM OUT THE SHADOWS, STEPS NOT AN APPARITION... BUT BLACK DIAMOND, ALIVE WITH GUNS DRAWN...

WELCOME, BUMPER!
YOU'VE FOUND ME!
BUT YOU WON'T LIVE
LONG ENOUGH TO
DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT!

THE SCORPION!
I'VE BEEN TRICKED...



SURPRISED
TO SEE ME,
SCORPION!

HOLY COW!
DIAMOND...
YOU'RE
ALIVE!

HE WON'T BE
FOR LONG!
BLAST HIM!



DISMAYED AND DAZZLED BY THE UNBEATABLE TEAM OF BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER, THE OUTLAWS SCATTER IN A HASTY RETREAT...

AS THE UNDERGROUND BATTLE RAGES ON, THE VIBRATIONS LOOSEN SOME BOULDERS...

LET'S GIVE UP!
DON'T SHOOT!

I'LL PLUG THE
FIRST MAN WHO
RUNS!



THE MINES GOING TO
CAVE IN! LET'S MAKE A
QUICK DASH FOR THE
ENTRANCE!

WE'LL BE TRAPPED
LIKE RATS IN A FEW
SECONDS IF WE
DON'T GET OUT OF
HERE! THE WALLS
ARE COMING DOWN!



KEEP GOING!
JUST A FEW
MORE FEET
AND WE'LL
BE SAFE!

HOWLING COYOTES!
WE JUST MADE IT!

RIGHT IN THE
NICK OF TIME...
THE WHOLE
PLACE CAVED
IN!





WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
YOU HAD ME HALF CRAZY
OUT OF MY MIND, THINK-
ING YOU WERE DEAD!

I PRETTY
NEARLY WAS
BUMPER!!!
I DID FALL
OVER THAT
CLIFF!!!

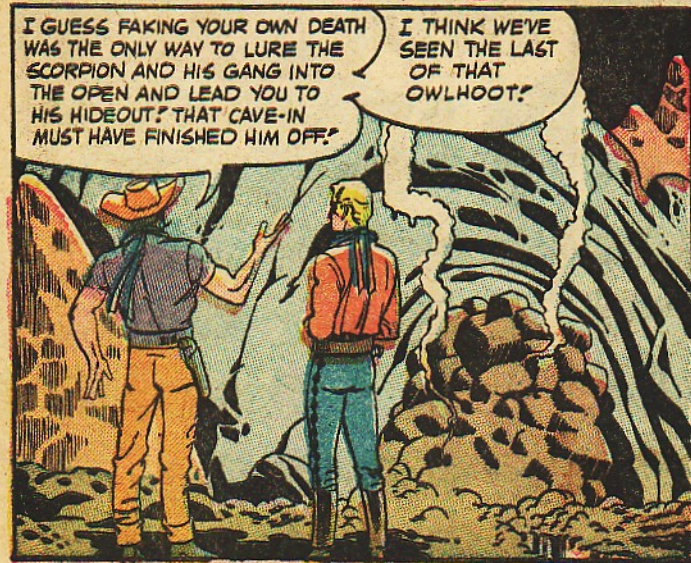
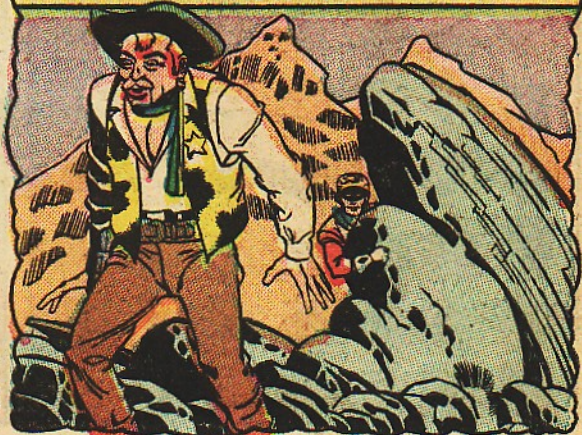


FOR A BREATHLESS MOMENT I DANG-
LED IN SPACE!!! THEN I CAUGHT ON TO
A STUMP! I WAS PRETTY BRUISED
AND SHAKEN!!!

BUT I INCHED MY WAY BACK UP TO THE TOP OF
THE CLIFF AGAIN! I SUDDENLY HIT ON AN IDEA
WHEN I SAW SHERIFF LARKIN
COMING!!!



I HID SO THAT I WOULD BE REPORTED DEAD!!!
AND I WAS RIGHT! THE SCORPION FELL FOR THE
TRAP! I KNEW HE'D BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD IF
HE THOUGHT I WAS OUT OF THE WAY AND SHOW
HIS HAND!



I GUESS FAKING YOUR OWN DEATH
WAS THE ONLY WAY TO LURE THE
SCORPION AND HIS GANG INTO
THE OPEN AND LEAD YOU TO
HIS HIDEOUT? THAT CAVE-IN
MUST HAVE FINISHED HIM OFF?

I THINK WE'VE
SEEN THE LAST
OF THAT
OWLHOOT!



I HOPE SO, BUMPER!
I SURE HOPE SO!

ROGUE INDIAN

WHEN THE PEACE-LOVING SHOSHONE INDIANS SHOWED GRIM SIGNS OF GOING ON THE WARPATH, BLACK DIAMOND, THE FIGHTING MARSHAL KNEW THAT SOMETHING EXTRA-ORDINARY MUST HAVE STIRRED THEM UP! BUT EVEN BLACK DIAMOND, WISE AS HE WAS TO INDIAN WAYS, COULD NOT POSSIBLY FORESEE THE HAIR-RAISING ADVENTURES WHICH AWAITED HIM IN THE VALLEY OF THE HIDDEN MOON!

YOUR CUNNING WILL AVAIL YOU NOT! TODAY YOU DIE... BLACK DIAMOND!

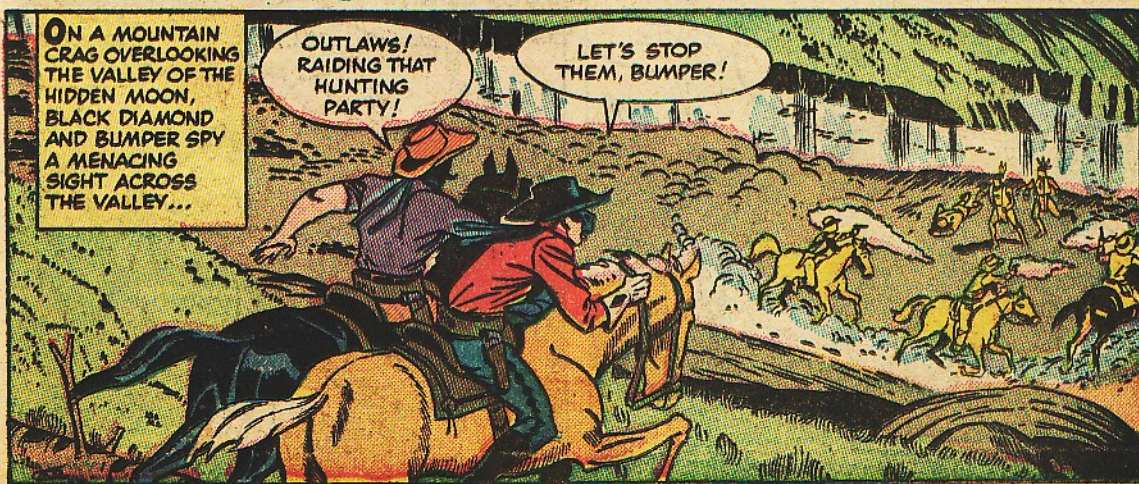
AN ILLUSTRATED STORY BY Myron Tepper



ON A MOUNTAIN CRAG OVERLOOKING THE VALLEY OF THE HIDDEN MOON, BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER SPY A MENACING SIGHT ACROSS THE VALLEY...

OUTLAWS! RAIDING THAT HUNTING PARTY!

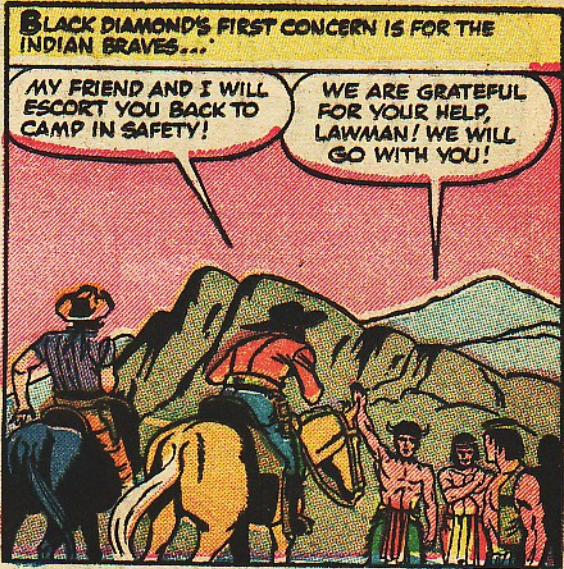
LET'S STOP THEM, BUMPER!





LOOK AT THOSE CHICKEN-HEARTED YARMINTS RUN!

WE'LL GET THEM ANOTHER TIME! LET'S TEND TO THE INDIANS FIRST!



BLACK DIAMOND'S FIRST CONCERN IS FOR THE INDIAN BRAVES...

MY FRIEND AND I WILL ESCORT YOU BACK TO CAMP IN SAFETY!

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP, LAWMAN! WE WILL GO WITH YOU!

MOMENTS LATER IN THE CAMP... DIAMOND UNFOLDS THE STRANGE INCIDENT TO CHIEF GRAY EAGLE...

WE'VE BEEN RAIDED MANY TIMES BY THESE OUTLAWS, AND WE DID NOT STRIKE BACK BECAUSE WE WANTED TO KEEP THE PEACE! BUT NOW MY PEOPLE CRY VENGEANCE FOR THE WRONGDOINGS WE HAVE SUFFERED!

YOU HAVE CAUSE TO BE ANGRY, GRAY EAGLE! BUT WHY HAVEN'T YOU GONE TO SHERIFF O'HARA FOR PROTECTION AGAINST THESE MEN?



TO APPEASE THE FIERY WRATH OF THE SHOSHONE, I HAVE GONE MANY TIMES TO POWWOW WITH THE SHERIFF! HE HAS TOLD ME OF INVESTIGATIONS THAT HE HAS MADE... ONLY TO FIND NO BAD-MEN IN THIS TERRITORY! BUT STILL THE VILLAGE IS RAIDED!



I'LL BRING THESE BADMEN IN TO FACE JUSTICE! DO I HAVE YOUR WORD AS A CHIEFTAIN THAT YOU WILL NOT MAKE WAR?

YOU ALWAYS KEEP YOUR WORD, MY FRIEND! I GIVE YOU MY...

WAIT! HE SPEAKS WITH FORKED TONGUE...



HIS HONOR IS THAT OF THE COYOTE! HE LEADS US WITH TREACHERY!

SILENCE! YOU WILL BOTH SETTLE YOUR QUARREL IN... THE TRIAL OF STRENGTH!

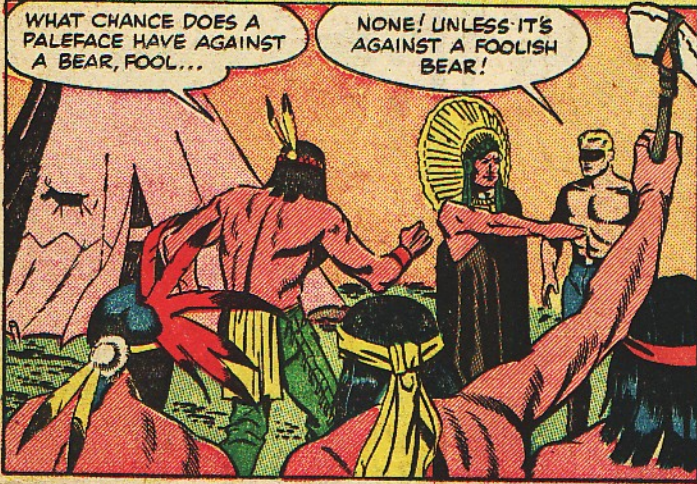
I'LL...



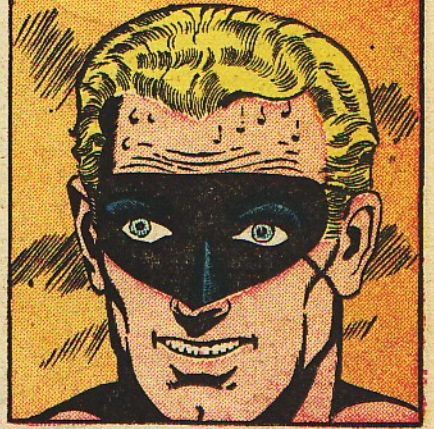
QUICKLY, ACCORDING TO THE INDIAN TRADITION OF CHALLENGE... AN ARENA IS CLEARED... A FEW PRELIMINARY WORDS OF CEREMONY... AND THE DEADLY COMBAT IS UNDER WAY...

WHAT CHANCE DOES A PALEFACE HAVE AGAINST A BEAR, FOOL...

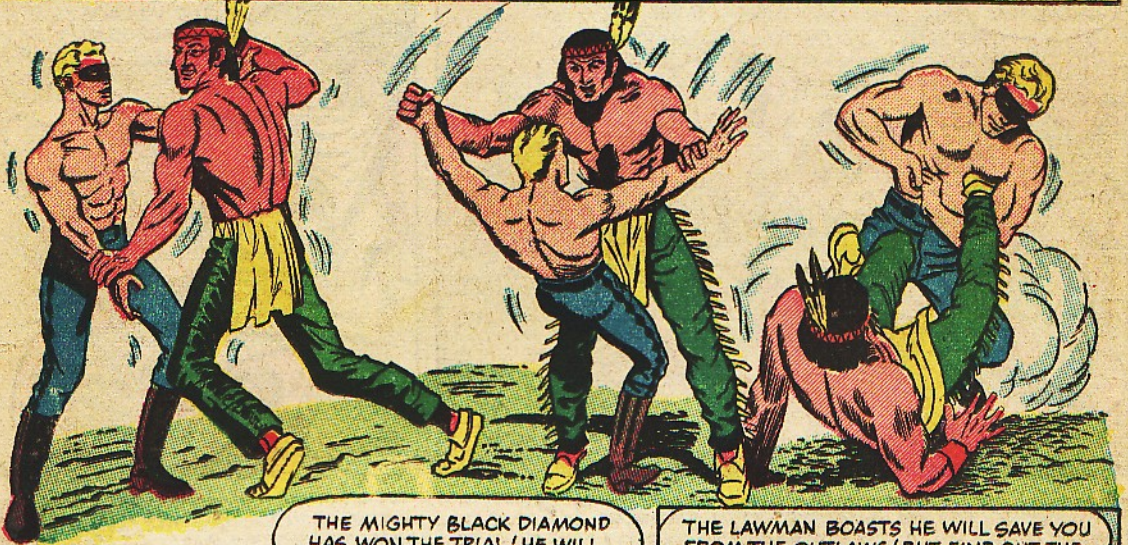
NONE! UNLESS IT'S AGAINST A FOOLISH BEAR!



I'VE GOT TO WIN... MAKE CRAZY BEAR LOSE FACE... BEFORE HE INCITES THE INDIANS TO MASSACRE!



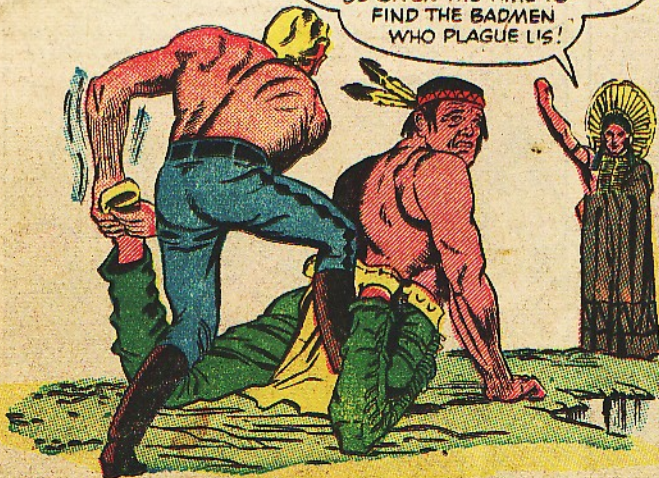
EAGERLY, THE GIANT BRAVE LUNGES... AS THE MINUTES PASS, THE NIMBLE MARSHAL SUCCESSFULLY WARDS OFF THE DEATH-DEALING BLOWS... ENRAGED BY HIS FUTILE EFFORTS, CRAZY BEAR FLAILS THE AIR MADLY! AN HOUR PASSES, UNTIL THE EXHAUSTED BRAVE CAN RAISE HIS ARMS NO LONGER... HE FALLS...



THE MIGHTY BLACK DIAMOND HAS WON THE TRIAL! HE WILL BE GIVEN THE TIME TO FIND THE BADMEN WHO PLAGUE US!

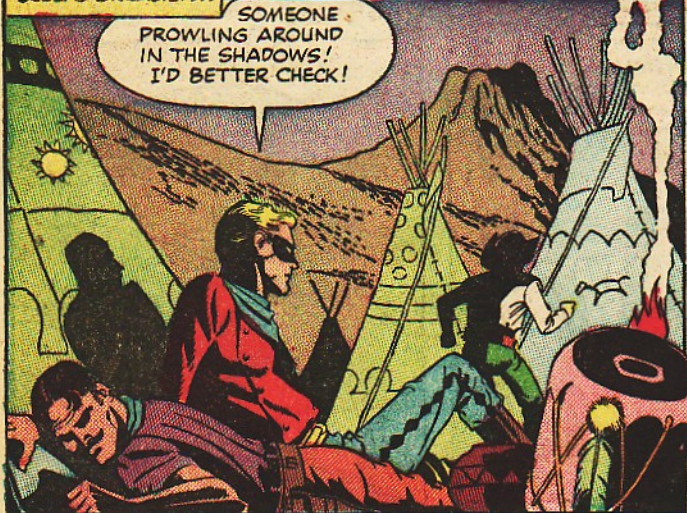
THE LAWMAN BOASTS HE WILL SAVE YOU FROM THE OUTLAWS! BUT FIND OUT THE TRUTH FOR YOURSELVES BEFORE YOU FOLLOW HIM!

GO! DO NOT DISGRACE YOURSELF BY SUCH TALK!



LATE THAT NIGHT, IN THE SHOSHONE VILLAGE... BLACK DIAMOND SLEEPS UNEASILY...

SOMEONE PROWLING AROUND IN THE SHADOWS! I'D BETTER CHECK!



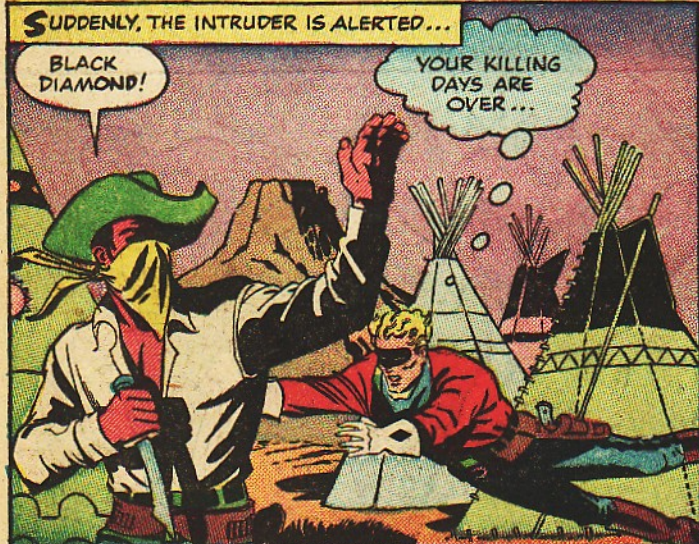
WHA...? IT'S ONE OF THE OWLHOOTS... HEADING FOR THE CHIEF'S TENT... WITH A KNIFE!



SUDDENLY, THE INTRUDER IS ALERTED...

BLACK DIAMOND!

YOUR KILLING DAYS ARE OVER...



AND DIAMOND IS FELLED BY THE SILENT SHADOW...

MUST LEAVE BEFORE THE VILLAGE IS AROUSED!



MY FRIEND! FOR WHAT CAUSE WERE YOU ATTACKED?

A MASKED MAN... WANTED TO KNIFE YOU! I TRIED TO STOP HIM... BUT HE OVERPOWERED ME AND ESCAPED!



I'VE GIVEN A PROMISE, GRAY EAGLE, THAT I'LL BRING THE TROUBLEMAKERS TO JUSTICE... AND I INTEND TO KEEP IT! BUMPER, YOU GO TO TOWN AND GET THE SHERIFF! I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

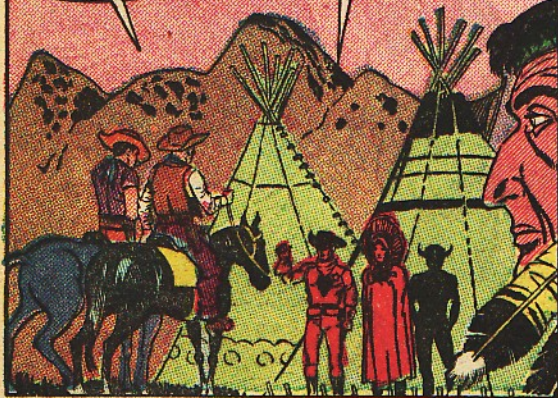
I'M ON MY WAY!



IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING, BUMPER RETURNS WITH THE SHERIFF...

WHAT'S THIS HURRY-UP MEETING FOR, DIAMOND?

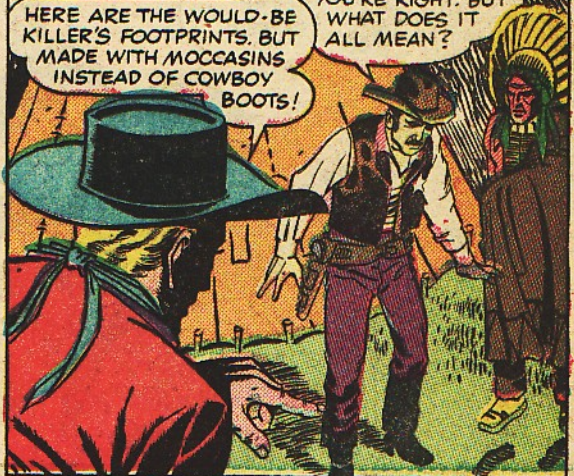
I'VE FOUND SOMETHING HERE, I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE!



WHAT HAVE BLACK DIAMOND'S KEEN EYES SEEN? HAS THE EARTH REVEALED A MYSTERIOUS CLUE? WE SHALL SOON SEE!

HERE ARE THE WOULD-BE KILLER'S FOOTPRINTS. BUT MADE WITH MOCCASINS INSTEAD OF COWBOY BOOTS!

YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?



I'VE GOT A HUNCH THE RAIDERS ARE INDIANS...DISGUISED AS OUTLAWS! IT WOULD EXPLAIN YOUR INVESTIGATIONS FINDING NO GANGS IN THIS TERRITORY! IF THEY ARE INDIANS, I'VE GOT A PLAN TO MAKE THEM SHOW THEIR HAND!



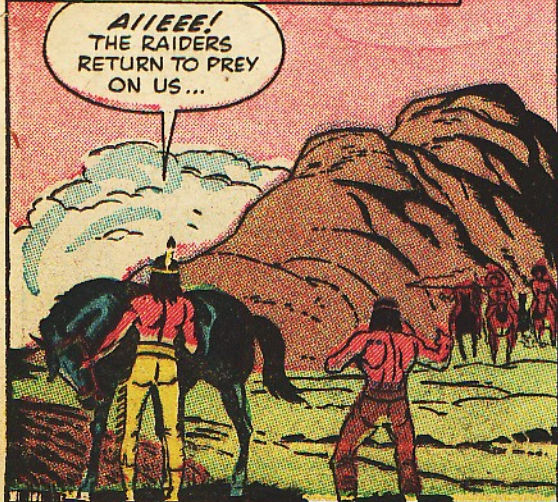
A GROWING MURMUR OF SURPRISE SWEEPS THE INDIAN VILLAGE AS CHIEF GRAY EAGLE BREAKS RELATIONS WITH HIS LIFETIME FRIEND, BLACK DIAMOND...

YOU HAVE BROUGHT NOTHING BUT TROUBLE AND DISCONTENT TO THE SHOSHONE! LEAVE THIS PLACE WHILE I STILL SPARE YOUR LIFE!



THE NEXT MORNING, SOME BRAVES ARE WATERING THEIR HORSES, WHEN ...

AIIEEE! THE RAIDERS RETURN TO PREY ON US...

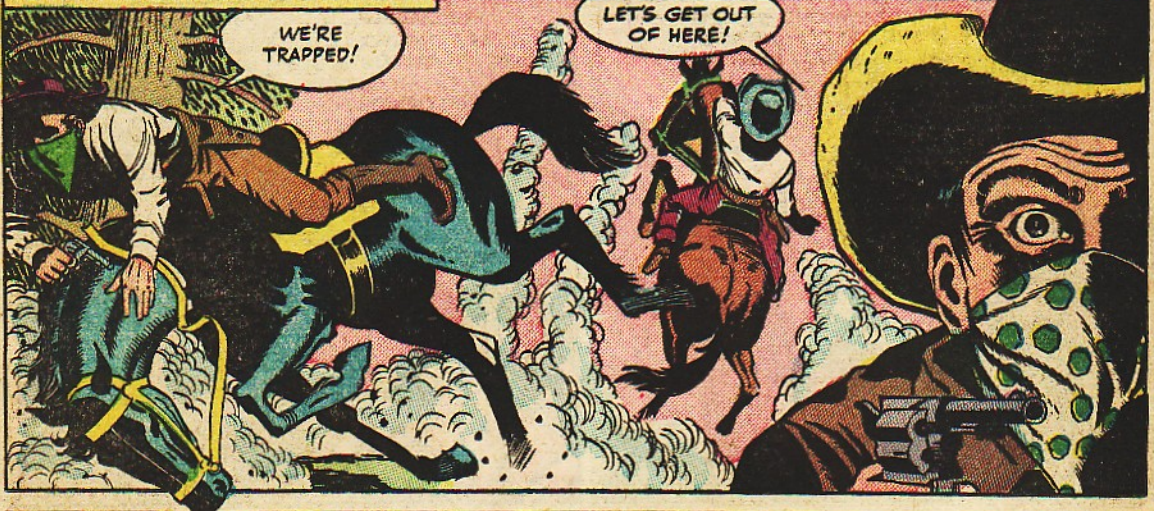


AS THE OWLHOOTS APPROACH THE LONELY WATER HOLE... EVEN THEIR KEEN SENSES DO NOT DETECT THE WELL-HIDDEN FORCE THAT SCRUTINIZES THEM...

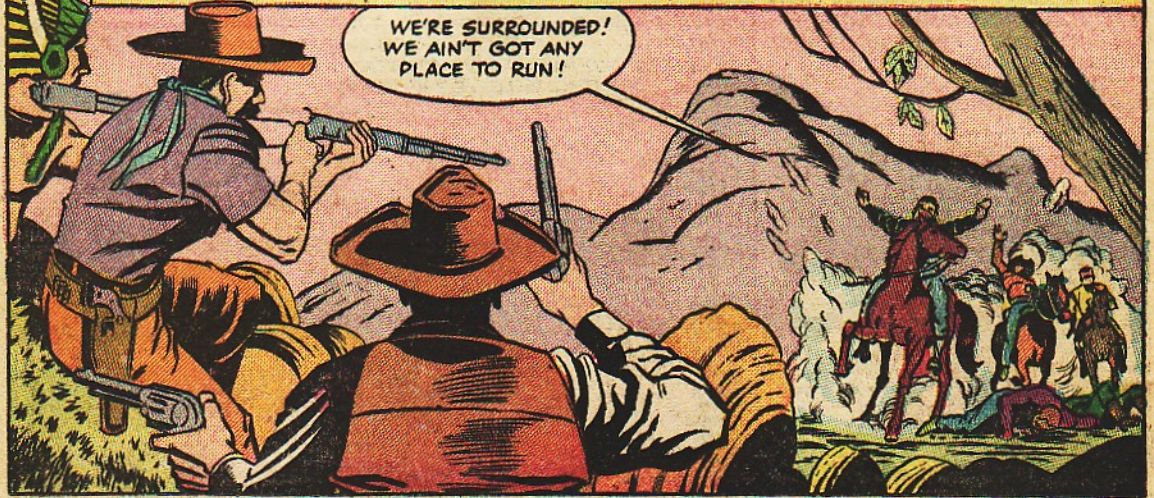
WE'VE GOT THEM SURROUNDED NOW! LET'S GO GET 'EM!



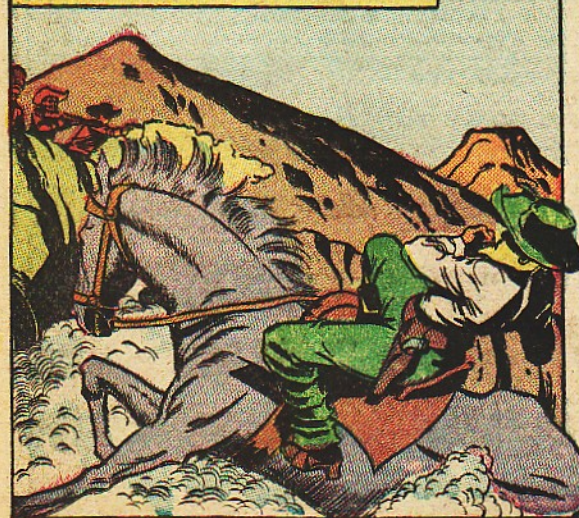
WITH THE FURY OF AN UNEXPECTED TORNADO, BLACK DIAMOND'S PLAN GOES INTO EFFECT! THE INDIAN BRAVES AT THE WATER HOLE, HURTLE WITH BLAZING GUNS DIRECTLY INTO THE STARTLED MARAUDERS, STRIKING TERROR AND CONFUSION AMONG THEM...



THEY TRY TO MAKE A BREAK FOR IT... AND ONLY WHEN DIAMOND AND HIS MEN COME FORTH FROM CONCEALMENT... DO THE OWLHOOTS REALIZE THE FULL EXTENT TO WHICH THEY WERE OUTWITTED...



SUDDENLY, THE GANG LEADER IS HIT...



THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE BAND THROW DOWN THEIR ARMS AND SURRENDER...



THE SHERIFF RIPS THE MASK OFF THE CAPTURED OWL-HOOTS, ONLY TO FIND...

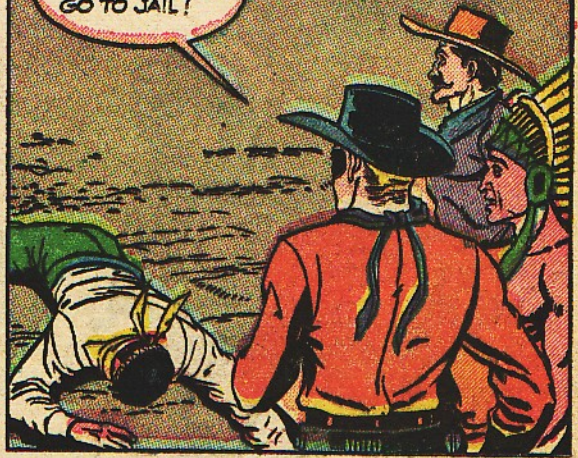
DIAMOND'S RIGHT! THEY'RE INDIANS!

HE HAS KEPT HIS VOW AND BROUGHT THE EVILDOERS TO JUSTICE!



THEIR LEADER WON'T LIVE TO GO TO JAIL!

LET'S FIND OUT WHO HE IS!



CRAZY BEAR!

YOUR TREACHERY KNOWS NO END, CRAZ, BEAR! BUT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COWARDLY ACTS!

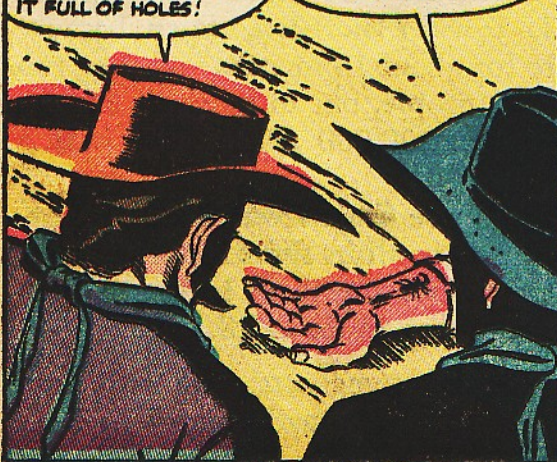


BY SLAYING YOU I HOPED TO GAIN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE TRIBE... AND THEN TRICK THEM INTO WAR! I WAS POSSESSED BY GREED... AND PLANNED TO LOOT AND PLUNDER THE TOWNS...



THAT WAS A MIGHTY SLICK PLAN HE HAD FIGURED! LUCKILY... WE WERE ON HAND TO PLUG IT FULL OF HOLES!

LOOK AT HIS WRIST! A TATTOO OF A SCORPION... IT WAS HIDDEN BY A BRACELET!



DO YOU THINK THE SCORPION HAD A FINGER IN THIS? BUT HOW COULD HE? HE WAS KILLED IN THAT MINE CAVE-IN!

I DON'T KNOW, BUMPER! BUT IF HE IS ALIVE... I HAVE A STRONG FEELING... WE'LL MEET AGAIN!





Big Fake

AT

Three Claims

BY

"THE BLACK DIAMOND"

We've all read the stories about Jesse James and his brother, Frank, the Younger Brothers, Belle Starr, the fantastic exploits of Quantrell and a dozen other old-time Western bandits, train robbers, bank robbers and stick-up men.

These men and their contemporaries have been glorified in history. But the truth is that the whole lot of them were nothing more nor less than ruthless killers. They had no gallantry. Often they would rob a bank by shooting and killing first and then taking the "easy loot." They had no morals and no scruples.

But I want to tell you about a bank robbery in those days that was pulled off without a shot fired and without anyone even being scared. But it didn't work because "Crime never does pay in the long run."

It was in March, 1889 that it all happened in the small town of Three Claims, Nevada. It was a short-lived town, because the mines in the area produced a lot of ore for about 18 months and then ran out. Three Claims never had more than 500 people, but in its short life the little bank there received deposits averaging \$200,000 a month. It was a good boom while it lasted.

Somehow Three Claims was the most law-abiding town in all the West in those days. And in all its short history neither the Smelter, the Assay Office, the Post Office, nor the Bank had even been threatened by a stick-up. The Sheriff had nothing to do at all.

Then, one day some cattlemen rode into town, shacked up at the "Star of the West Hotel," made merry in Rose.

LaRose's Saloon and let it be known that Steve Wooster and his boys were riding in to hold up the bank.

Nobody knew at the time that Harry Harwood, cashier of the Three Claims First National Bank was really the brother of Steve Wooster, the much-feared desperado. But he was.

Harry Harwood was a very kind old fellow and "honest" as the day was long. Everyone in Three Claims would vouch for that. Many called him, "Honest Harry Harwood," because of his insistence on scrupulous honesty in every deal. It was "Honest Harry" really who organized the "Three Claims Vigilante Protective Society," whose duty was to see to it that no skulduggery could ever take place in Three Claims. Harry was a real crusader. And no-one knew that he was the brother of Steve Wooster, the terror of the plains.

If they didn't know he was Steve's brother, they, of course, didn't know that he looked as much like him as an identical twin, but he did.

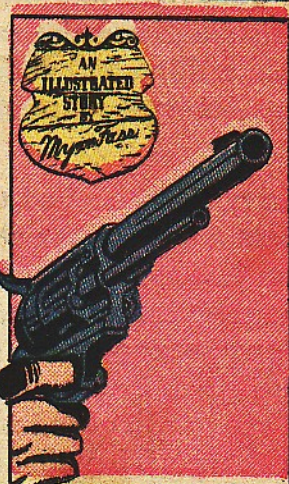
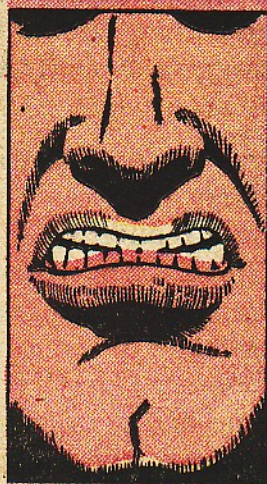
But I'm getting ahead of my story. On the afternoon of March 4, 1889, something very peculiar happened. The Wooster raiders rode into town. The Bank was just ready to close for the day. For some mysterious reason the vigilantes were not summoned to protect the town, as the Wooster gang approached. For some reason the Wooster gang were able to walk right into the bank. The alarm bell did not go off. No-one offered any resistance, and the raiders scooped up more than \$300,000 in currency and gold bullion and about \$50,000 in gold nuggets. Nobody knew why the gold nuggets were there in the first place.

That was the neatest trick of those times. Harry Wooster had taken the name of Harry Harwood, honest banker, and spent a whole year working up a respectable reputation in Three Claims. He was just as much a crook as his brother, Steve. They worked together. When the time came, Steve, who looked just like Harry, changed places with him. Harry went out into the hills and took command of the raiders. Then he rode into town. Everything was arranged and "Honest Harry" was really the leader of the bandits. He stuck up his own bank and had put his "look-alike" brother in charge. They made an enormous haul—one of the slickest robberies of the Old West—except one thing went wrong.

When they got back to the hills with their loot and made camp, made themselves comfortable and began to celebrate, they were suddenly surrounded by U. S. Marshal Kaplan and his posse. They were all taken into custody. All the money was recovered and turned back to the honest citizens of Three Claims.

I know this story very well, because U. S. Marshal Mos Kaplan was my uncle.

THE END



THE TOWN: DODGE CITY, KANSAS, THE TIME: NOON, AND DODGE CITY SLEEPS IN SWELTERING HEAT, BUT THROUGH THE DUST THAT HANGS IN BRIGHT COLUMNS ABOVE THE GUNBAKED STREET, A LEAN, HARD MAN COMES RIDING. HIS EYES BLAZING WITH HATE, HIS MOUTH SET IN GRIM DETERMINATION! IN FRONT OF THE LUCKY DOLLAR SALOON HE REINS IN, DISMOUNTS. HE ENTERS THE SALOON AND AN UNCONSCIOUS GESTURE TAKES HIS HAND TOWARD HIS GUN. IT IS CLEARLY WRITTEN ON THIS MAN'S FACE, HIS MISSION IS...

VENGEANCE!

IN THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE, BLACK DIAMOND AND HIS SIDEKICK BUMPER LEAP TO SUDDEN GALVANIZED ACTION...



YOUR MOVE, BLACK DIAMOND! THINGS SURE HAVE BEEN NICE AND PEACEFUL-LIKE 'ROUND THESE PARTS!

YOU CAN SAY THAT AG... HUH?! GUN SHOTS OUTSIDE!

GREAT SNAKES! SOME BUSHWACKER HAS PLUGGED CALEB STONE!

HE'S DEAD! HMM, THAT'S ODD! HE WAS SHOT IN THE CHEST, WHICH MEANS HE MUST'VE FACED HIS KILLER. AND YET THERE AREN'T MANY MEN IN THIS TOWN WHO ARE AS FAST ON THE DRAW AS CALEB STONE!



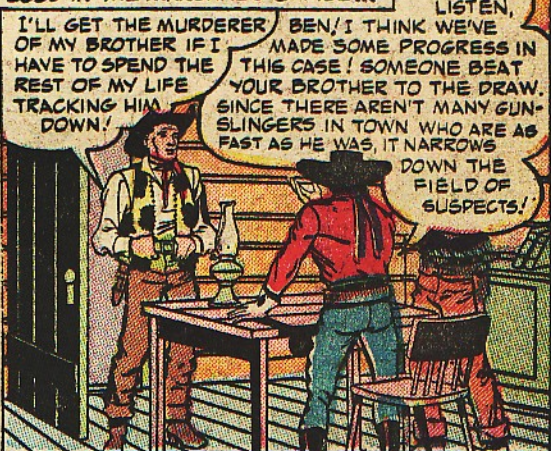
THEN... MOMENTS LATER... IN THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE.



WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE, DIAMOND?

FIRST OFF, I'D BETTER GET THIS LETTER TO BEN STONE, THE DEAD MAN'S BROTHER! HEAR HE'S GOT A HERD ROUNDED UP AND READY FOR A TRAIL DRIVE TO SIOUX CITY, STARTING TOMORROW MORNING. I KNOW HE'LL WANT TO BE HERE FOR THE FUNERAL.

AFTER THE BURIAL, BLACK DIAMOND RECEIVES A TALL, GAUNT VISITOR. THE HOARSE, ANGRY TONES OF THE BROTHER OF THE MURDERED MAN, RING LOUD IN THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE...



I'LL GET THE MURDERER REST OF MY LIFE TRACKING HIM DOWN!

BEN, I THINK WE'VE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN THIS CASE! SOMEONE BEAT YOUR BROTHER TO THE DRAW. SINCE THERE AREN'T MANY GUNSLINGERS IN TOWN WHO ARE AS FAST AS HE WAS, IT NARROWS

LISTEN, DOWN THE FIELD OF SUSPECTS!

CALEB WAS THE FASTEST AND DEADLIEST MAN WITH A GUN IN THE WHOLE WEST! WHEREVER HE WENT, YOUNG FIGHTERS WERE ALWAYS TRYING TO TANGLE WITH HIM...

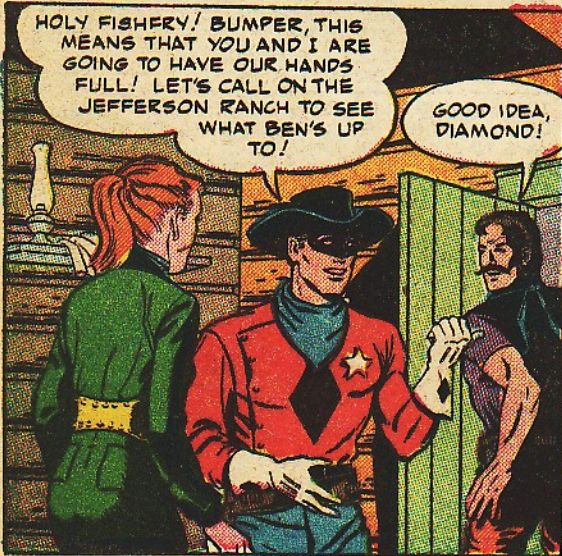
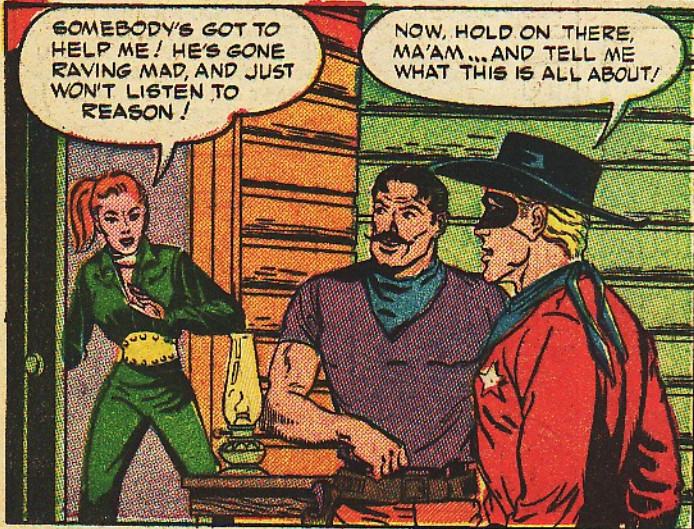


BUT NO MAN COULD EVER BEAT HIM, HONESTLY! I'M GOING TO SAVE THE STATE THE PRICE OF A TRIAL, 'CAUSE THIS IS ONE KILLER I'M GOING TO DEAL WITH PERSONALLY!

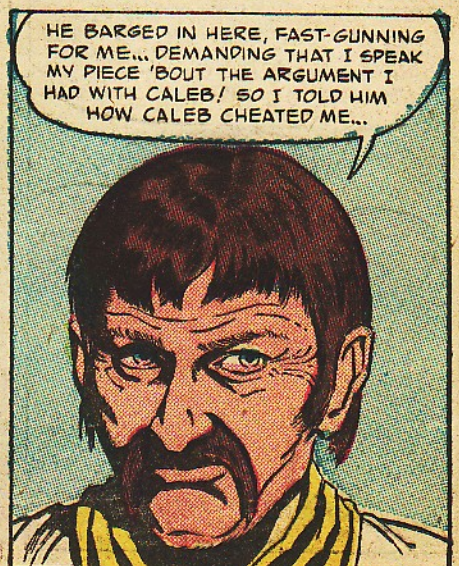
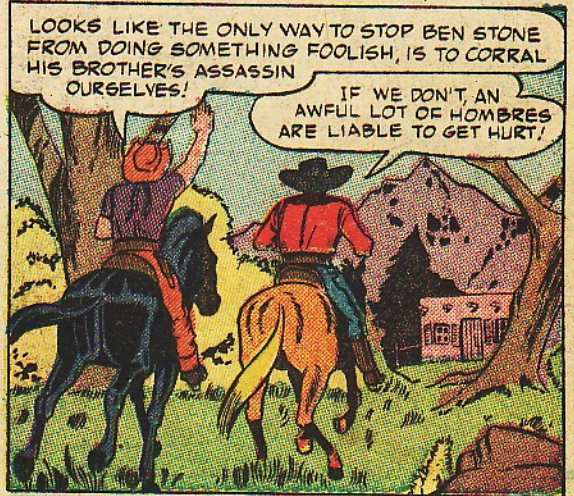
AS MARSHAL, I'VE GOT TO TRY TO KEEP THE PEACE, SO I'LL HAVE TO BRING YOU IN FOR MURDER!



THE NEXT MORNING, A MYSTERICAL GIRL BUSTS INTO THE OFFICE.



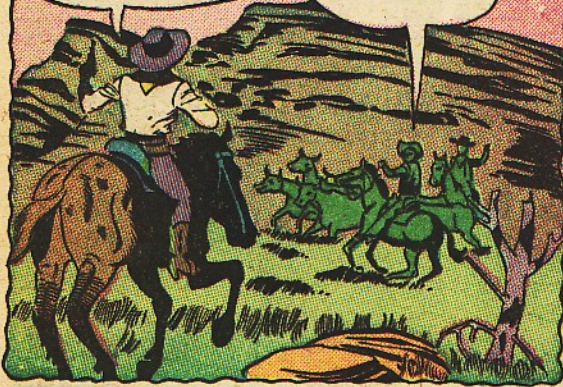
AS FAST AS THEIR MOUNTS WILL RIDE, THE MARSHAL AND BUMPER MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE RANCH...



...TOLD HIM HOW WHILE RIDING THE RIM OF THE NORTH RANGE, I CAUGHT SOME RUSTLERS, RED-HANDED RUNNING OFF WITH MY CATTLE!"

THE DIRTY SIDEWINDERS! THEY'RE MAKING OFF WITH THE WHOLE HERD!

LET'S VAMOOSE, BOYS! THE OLD BUZZARD'S SPOT-TEDED US!



OF ALL THE TWO-FOOTED COYOTES, CATTLE-RUSTLERS ARE THE WORST! CALEB... HOW COULD YOU...?

HERE! THIS'LL SETTLE YOUR HASH, JEFFERSON!



...BUT THE NEXT DAY, WHEN I ACCUSED HIM IN FRONT OF THE SHERIFF IN THE LUCKY DOLLAR SALOON...

THIS TIME I'VE CAUGHT HIM RED-HANDED MAKING OFF WITH MY CATTLE! SHERIFF, ARREST HIM!

YOU AIN'T GOT NO EVIDENCE AGAINST ME FOR RUSTLING! MY BOYS WERE ALL IN TOWN LAST NIGHT.

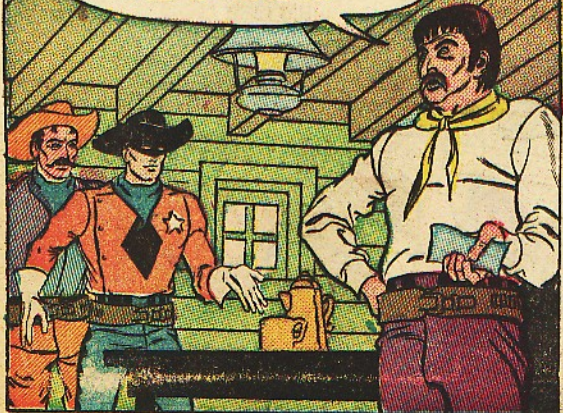


ARE YOU STANDING THERE AND TRYING TO TELL FOLKS MY STOCK RAN OFF BY THEMSELVES?

RECKON IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, BUT THERE AIN'T NO OTHER EXPLANATION! HAW! HAW! SOMEBODY BETTER GET THE OLD MAN OUTTA HERE BEFORE HE 'BLOWS A GASKET.'

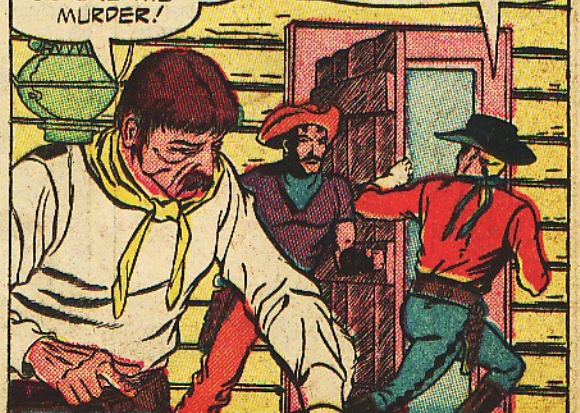


BUT EVEN THOUGH CALEB DESERVED KILLING MORE THAN ANY HOMBRE I EVER KNEW, I DIDN'T DO IT! I WAS IN DODGE CITY SELLING SOME STOCK AT THE TIME...EVEN SHOWED BEN THESE BILLS OF SALE TO PROVE IT!



BUT I TOLD HIM TO HUNT THAT GUNHAWK, RED HARRIS! HEARD HE AND CALEB HAD A FALLING OUT JUST BEFORE THE MURDER!

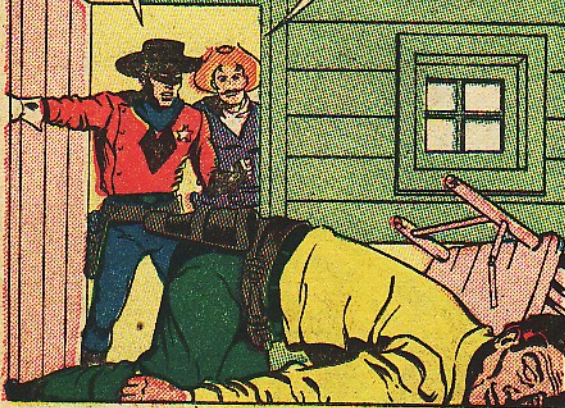
THEN I GUESS THAT ANSWERS WHERE BEN IS HEADED FOR NEXT! LET'S TRY TO CATCH UP WITH HIM, BUMPER!



BUT WHEN THEY REACHED HARRIS' CABIN...

TOO LATE, BUMPER!
RED HARRIS... ON
THE FLOOR!

DURN THAT MULE-HEADED
CRITTER, BEN! HE REALLY
MEANS BUSINESS!



WAIT! HE'S
STILL ALIVE!

OOO-O!



FURTHER INVESTIGATION, SHOWS THAT RED HARRIS WAS SEVERELY BEATEN...

IT WAS BEN STONE WHO JUMPED ME! ...HE WAS LOCO... SAID HE WAS GOING TO KILL ME TO AVENGE HIS BROTHER'S DEATH! WHEN I TOLD HIM IT WASN'T ME WHO DRY-GULCHED CALEB, HE GOT MAD AND MESSED ME UP!

DO YOU
FEEL UP TO
TELLING ME
WHAT THIS
ATTACK WAS
ALL ABOUT?



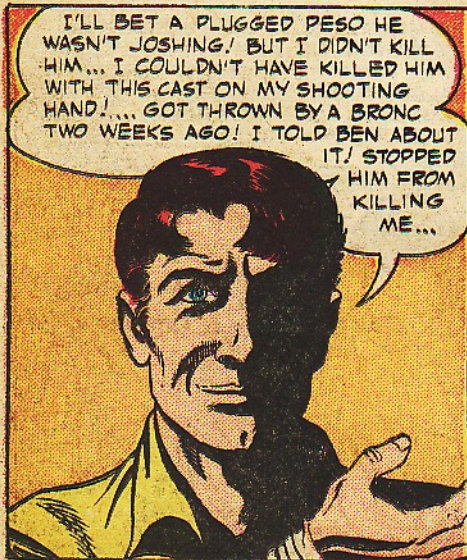
"...MAY AS WELL! BEING MARSHAL... YOU'RE BOUND TO FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER! ME AND CALEB SOLD SOME CATTLE WE RUSTLED! WE WERE DIVVYING UP WHEN I CAUGHT HIM CHEATING ME OUT OF MY RIGHT-FUL SHARE! IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO STOMACH, SO I CALLED HIM ON IT..."

YOU TWO-BIT WELSHER! HOLDING OUT ON ME WILL GET YOU A ONE WAY TICKET TO BOOT HILL!



THIS AIN'T NO WAY FOR PARTNERS TO ACT, RED! TAKE IT EASY, I WAS JUST JOSHING YOU...

I'LL BET A PLUGGED PESO HE WASN'T JOSHING! BUT I DIDN'T KILL HIM... I COULDN'T HAVE KILLED HIM WITH THIS CAST ON MY SHOOTING HAND! ... GOT THROWN BY A BRONG TWO WEEKS AGO! I TOLD BEN ABOUT IT! STOPPED HIM FROM KILLING ME...



SENT HIM TO SEE ROSIE, THOUGH! SHE WAS CALEB'S GAL! GOT REAL SORE AT HIM WHEN HE STARTED STEPPING OUT ON HER!

YOU STAY HERE AND BEHAVE YOURSELF, RED! I'LL TEND TO YOU LATER! BUMPER, LET'S GET TO ROSIE'S PLACE, PRONTO! AND STOP A KID FROM MAKING THE SORRIEST MISTAKE OF HIS LIFE!



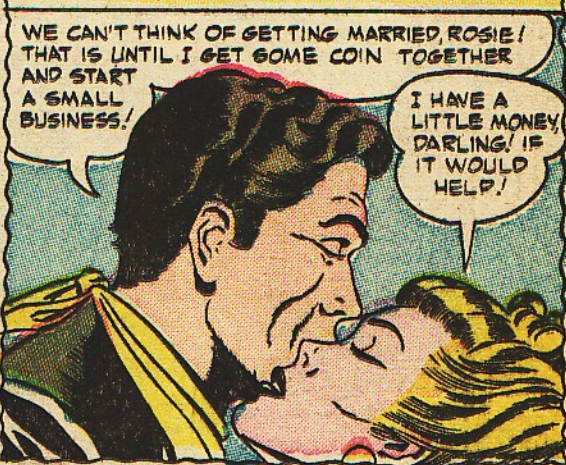
LAST ROSIE'S ROOMING HOUSE, BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER ARE RELIEVED TO FIND THE GIRL SHAKEN, BUT UNHURT...



YOU, OKAY, MISS?

AS OKAY AS A GAL CAN BE... AFTER A VISIT FROM A ONE MAN LYNCHING COMMITTEE BY THE NAME OF BEN STONE! HE WANTED TO KNOW MY TIE-IN WITH HIS BROTHER!

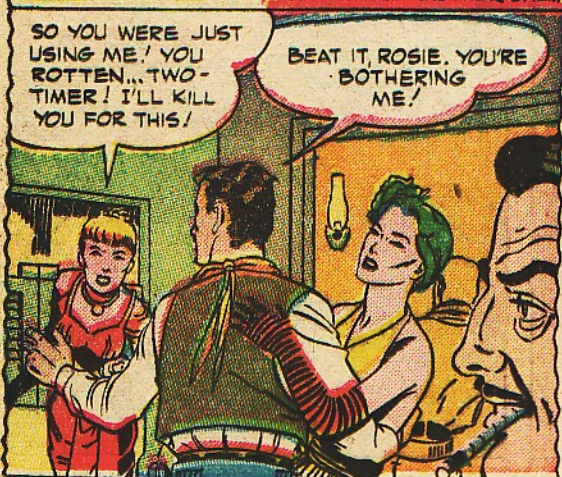
"I TOLD HIM HOW CALEB WOULD WORM MY SAVINGS AWAY FROM ME, BY PRETENDING TO BE IN LOVE WITH ME. BUT WHEN HIS ARMS WERE AROUND ME, HE WAS MY MAN, NO MATTER WHAT HE WAS!"



WE CAN'T THINK OF GETTING MARRIED, ROSIE! THAT IS UNTIL I GET SOME COIN TOGETHER AND START A SMALL BUSINESS!

I HAVE A LITTLE MONEY, DARLING! IF IT WOULD HELP!

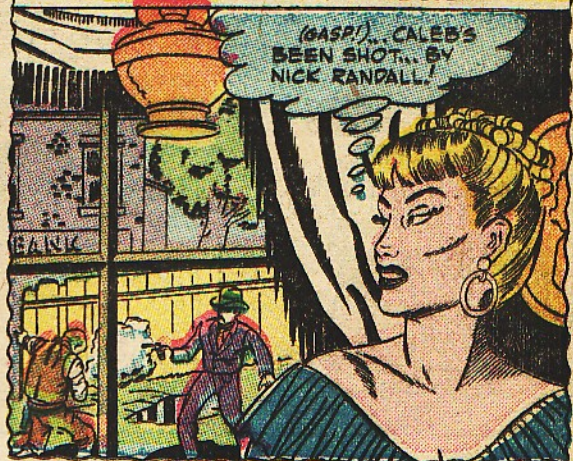
"...WHEN HE FINALLY DID GET SOME COIN TOGETHER, HE WANTED NO PART OF ME! THEN, ONE DAY... I CAUGHT HIM PLAYING AROUND WITH ANOTHER GAL..."



SO YOU WERE JUST USING ME! YOU ROTTEN... TWO-TIMER! I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!

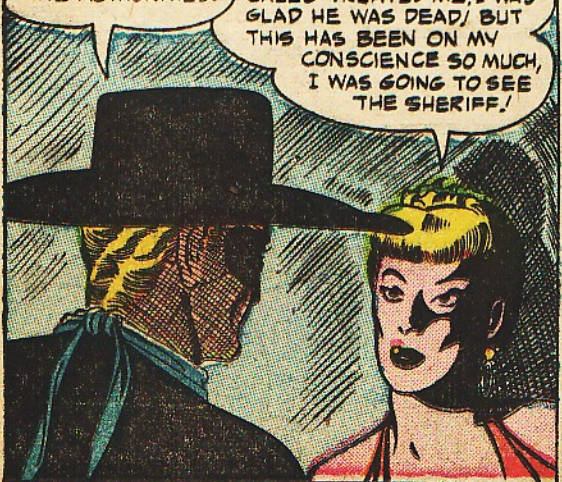
BEAT IT, ROSIE. YOU'RE BOTHERING ME!

"HE NEVER COULD PASS A BAR OR A GAMING-TABLE OR A PRETTY FACE... I DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM, MARSHALL! ONE NIGHT FROM MY WINDOW... I SAW NICK RANDALL DOING THE JOB..."



(GASP!)... CALEB'S BEEN SHOT... BY NICK RANDALL!

WHY DIDN'T YOU REPORT THIS TO THE 'AUTHORITIES?'



I WAS SO FILLED WITH HATRED FOR THE WAY CALEB TREATED ME, I WAS GLAD HE WAS DEAD! BUT THIS HAS BEEN ON MY CONSCIENCE SO MUCH, I WAS GOING TO SEE THE SHERIFF!

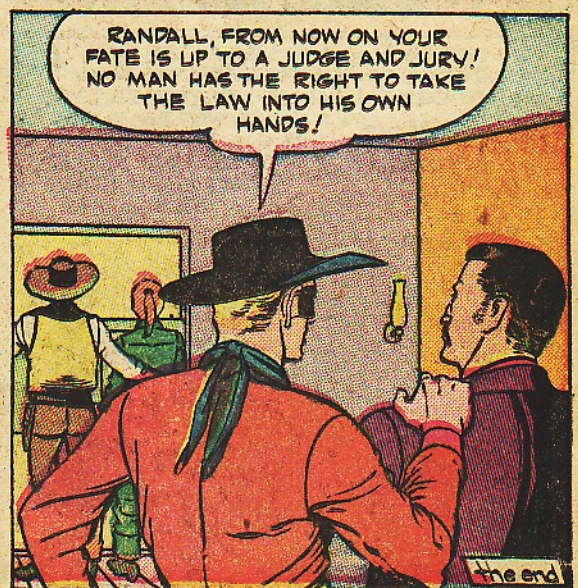
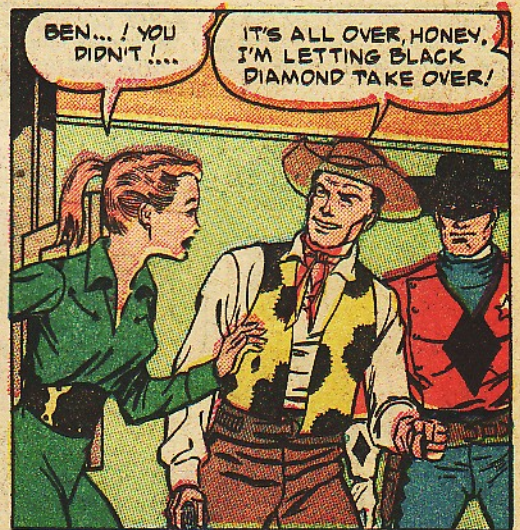
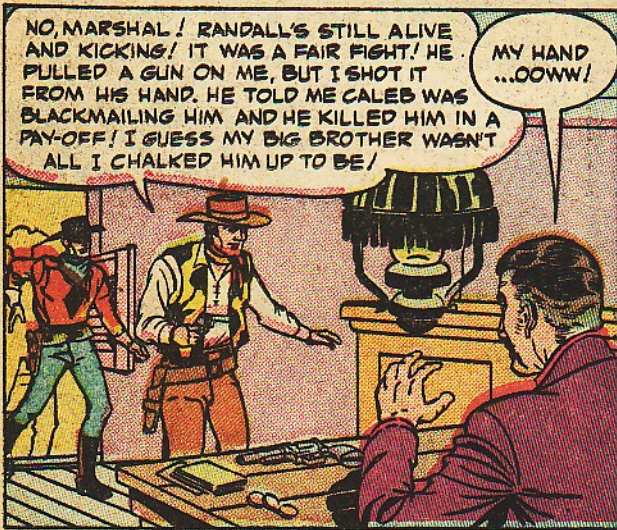
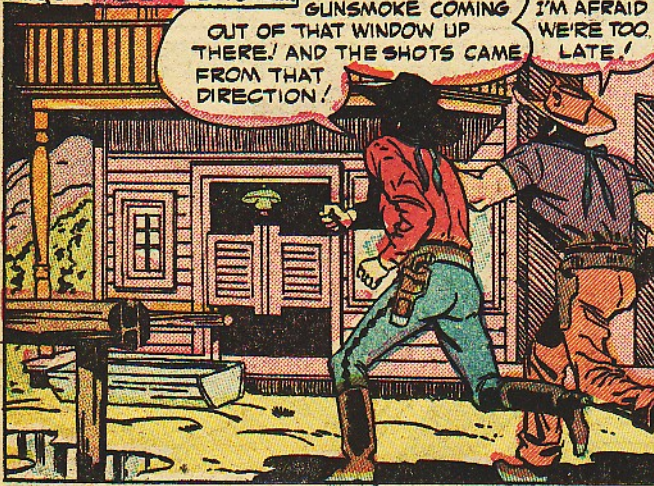
IN AN INSTANT, BLACK DIAMOND AND BUMPER RUSH OUT OF THE DOOR...



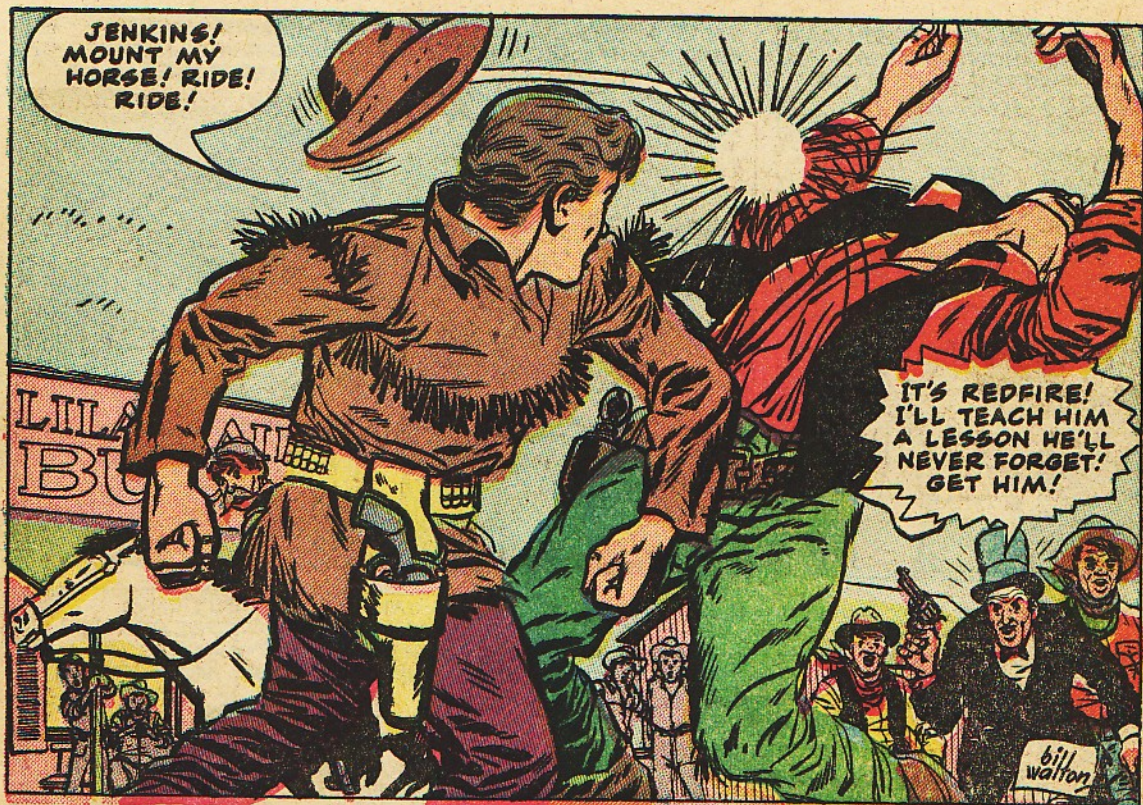
THE SILVER DOLLAR SALOON'S OUR NEXT STOP, BUMPER!

AS DIAMOND AND BUMPER ARE ABOUT TO ENTER THE SALOON, A FUSILADE OF GUNSHOTS SCATTER THE PEACEFUL AIR OF THE LITTLE TOWN...

WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, THEY BURST INTO THE OFFICE TO FIND BEN WITH THE STILL SMOKING GUN IN HIS HAND...



the end



JENKINS!
MOUNT MY
HORSE! RIDE!
RIDE!

IT'S REDFIRE!
I'LL TEACH HIM
A LESSON HE'LL
NEVER FORGET!
GET HIM!

bill
walton

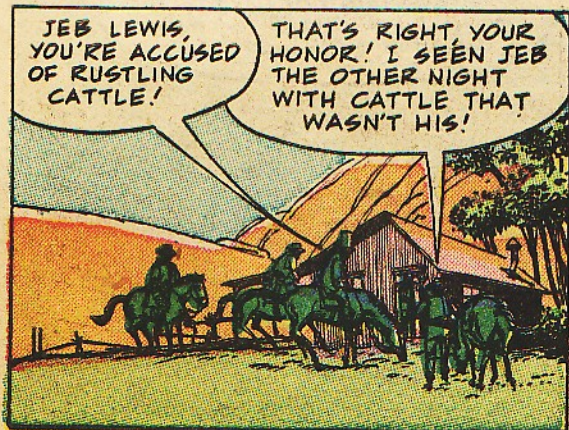
REDFIRE

COULD REDFIRE OUTWIT THE CROOKEDDEST FRAUD IN THE WEST? A JUDGE WHO WAS NO JUDGE AT ALL, BUT AN IMPOSTER KNOWING LITTLE ABOUT LAW AND CARING LESS! A SELF-ELECTED FAKE WHOSE BENCH WAS A BAR AND WHOSE COURTROOM WAS THE JAILHOUSE INTO WHICH HE THREW INNOCENT MEN! BY OPPOSING THE SHREWDEST THIEF ON THE FRONTIER, REDFIRE WALKED A TIGHTROPE OF DANGER THAT MIGHT QUICKLY BE TRANSFORMED INTO HIS OWN NOOSE!

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A FAKE 'JUDGE' WHO PRETENDED TO BELIEVE IN JUSTICE...SWIFT, SUDDEN AND PROFITABLE!

I-IT'S A LIE! ... I BEEN SICK ALL WEEK! I NEVER LEFT THE HOUSE!

GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, YOU HEARD THE EVIDENCE. WHAT'S YOUR VERDICT?

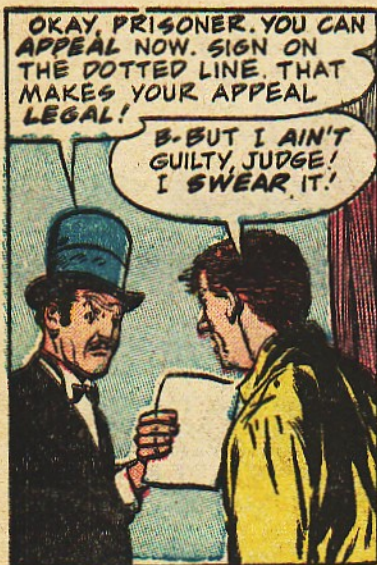


JEB LEWIS, YOU'RE ACCUSED OF RUSTLING CATTLE!

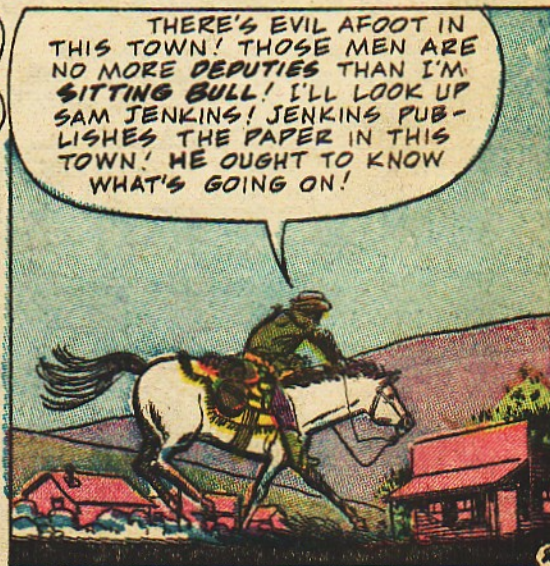
THAT'S RIGHT, YOUR HONOR! I SEEN JEB THE OTHER NIGHT WITH CATTLE THAT WASN'T HIS!



GUILTY!



LATER THAT DAY, AS REDFIRE ENTERS TOWN...



MEANWHILE, AT THE CROOKEVILLE SALOON, ACROSS THE STREET...

'JUDGE' CROOKE! THIS HERE HOMBRE WAS SAYIN' NASTY THINGS AT THE BAR ABOUT YOU!

I'M REAL SORRY TO HEAR THAT, SON! COURTS IN SESSION!



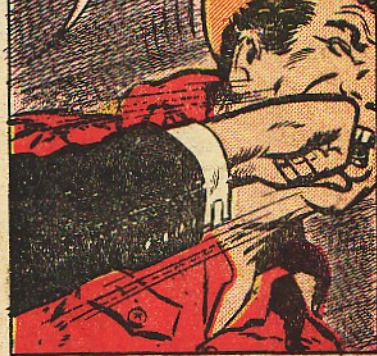
HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY BEFORE I PASS SENTENCE UPON YOU?

C-CAN'T A MAN SAY WHAT HE WANTS TO IN THIS TOWN?



NO! GUILTY AS CHARGED! TAKE HIM TO JAIL!

N-NO!... WAIT! W-WAIT!



LOOK AT THIS, 'JUDGE'! THAT MEDDLIN NEWS-PAPER EDITOR, JENKINS, ATTACKED YOU AGAIN! HE CALLS YOU A CROOK AND IMPOSTER WHO STOLE HIS WAY INTO OFFICE!

HMMM... IT'S TIME JUSTICE STEPPED IN! ARREST JENKINS! I'LL GIVE HIM A PUBLIC TRIAL!



SHORTLY AFTER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LILAC VALLEY BUGLE...

THE SHERIFF IS AN EX-RUSTLER, HIS DEPUTIES ARE JAILBIRDS, THE 'JUDGE' IS A SWINDLER FROM THE EAST WHO FAKED HIS OWN ELECTION AND IS USING FORCE AND THE LAW TO STEAL THE CITIZENS BLIND!

FOR THAT SPEECH ALONE I CAN JAIL YOU, JENKINS... AN' I WILL!



ONE SIDE, KID, OR YOU'LL GO TO PRISON, TOO, FOR ASSOCIATIN' WITH THIS CRIMINAL!

STAY OUT OF THIS, REDFIRE! I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP! I NEED WHAT THIS WHOLE TOWN NEEDS... JUSTICE!

JUSTICE IS WHAT YOU'LL GET! MARCH!

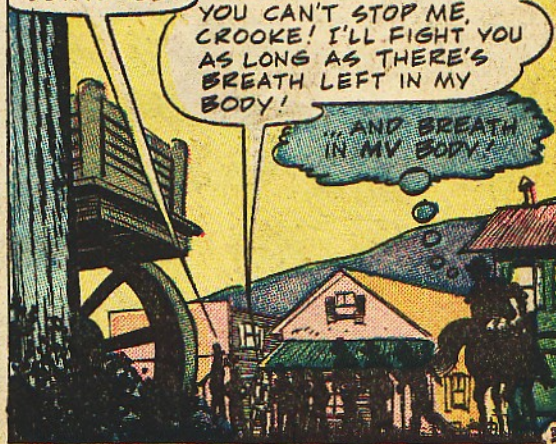


MINUTES LATER, IN THE TOWN SQUARE...

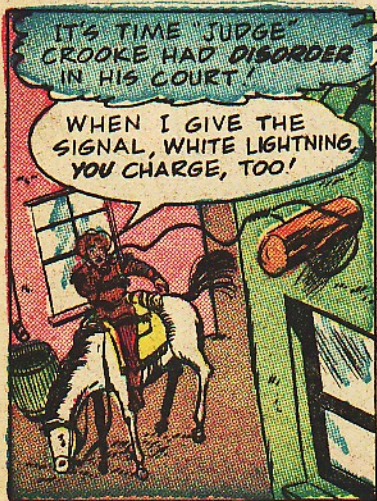
JENKINS, YOU'RE GUILTY OF TAKING MY NAME IN VAIN! THAT MEANS A PRISON SENTENCE!

YOU CAN'T STOP ME, CROOKE! I'LL FIGHT YOU AS LONG AS THERE'S BREATH LEFT IN MY BODY!

...AND BREATH IN MY BODY!



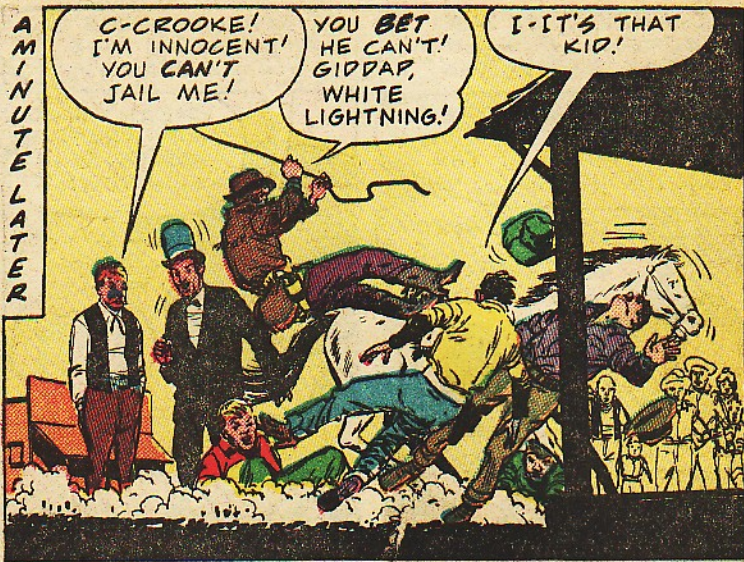
LATER, AS REDFIRE GOES INTO ACTION ...



IT'S TIME "JUDGE" CROOKE HAD DISORDER IN HIS COURT!

WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL, WHITE LIGHTNING, YOU CHARGE, TOO!

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C-CROOKE! I'M INNOCENT! YOU CAN'T JAIL ME!

YOU BET HE CAN'T! GIDDAP, WHITE LIGHTNING!

I-IT'S THAT KID!



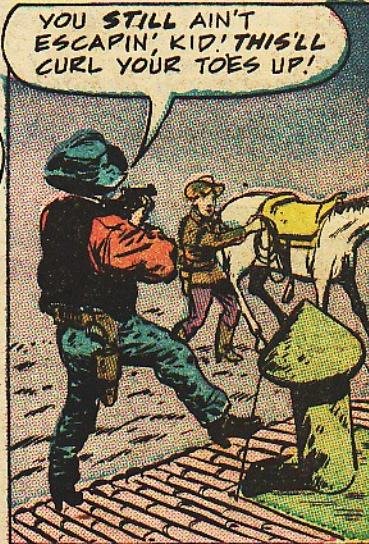
H-HE'S OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE! SHOOT HIM DOWN!

A WRONG DECISION "JUDGE" JENKINS, MOUNT MY HORSE!

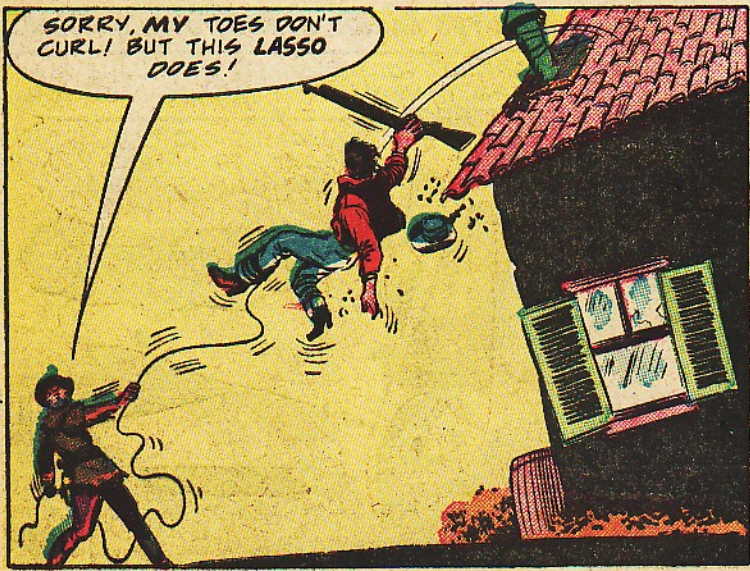


CALL OFF YOUR VARMINTS "JUDGE!" YOU'RE LOOKING RIGHT DOWN MY GUN BARREL!

SHERIFF, TELL 'EM NOT TO DO ANYTHING! LET JENKINS AND THE BOY ALONE!



YOU STILL AIN'T ESCAPIN', KID! THIS'LL CURL YOUR TOES UP!



SORRY, MY TOES DON'T CURL! BUT THIS LASSO DOES!



JENKINS, HEAD FOR A GHOST TOWN NAMED BONANZA JUNCTION! HIDE OUT IN THE OLD SALOON! I'LL JOIN YOU THERE TONIGHT!

ALRIGHT, REDFIRE! LET'S GO WHITE LIGHTNING!

AN HOUR LATER, AS RED FIRE RETURNS TO TOWN BY A ROUND-ABOUT ROUTE

SHORTLY AFTER, IN SHERIFF MANSE'S OFFICE

AT THE SAME TIME, IN THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE...

R-RED FIRE! I SEEN WHAT YOU DID IN THE TOWN SQUARE! YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD NERVE ENOUGH TO STAND UP TO CROOKE!

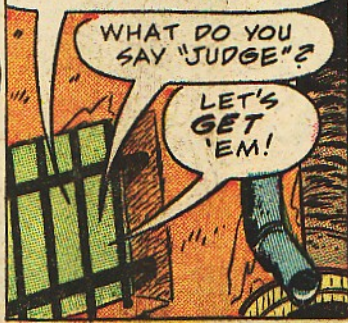
NEVER MIND THAT! WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST! I WANT YOU TO GO TO CROOKE AND TELL HIM THIS!



I'M TELLIN' YOU THIS BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO ANY TROUBLE MYSELF! I HEARD THAT JENKINS AND RED FIRE WERE HIDIN' OUT IN BONANZA JUNCTION!

WHAT DO YOU SAY "JUDGE"?

LET'S GET 'EM!



NOBODY SENDS ANY MESSAGES OUTA CROOKEVILLE WITHOUT THE "JUDGE'S" PERMISSION!



THEN I'LL SET A PRECEDENT!



TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE GENITAN TERRITORY

THAT NIGHT, IN THE ABANDONED TOWN OF BONANZA JUNCTION...

T-THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS, JUDGE!

DON'T BE A FOOL, SHERIFF! SPLIT UP YOUR MEN! WE'LL CONDUCT A HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCH! WE CAN'T LET JENKINS ESCAPE!



... C-CROOKE AND THE SHERIFF ARE HERE! RED FIRE HAS BETRAYED ME!

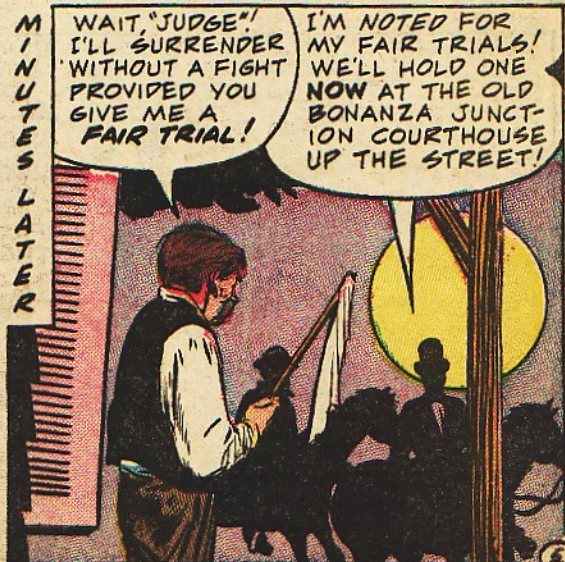
NOT AT ALL, JENKINS! HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL DO!



M I N U T E S L A T E R

WAIT, "JUDGE"! I'LL SURRENDER WITHOUT A FIGHT PROVIDED YOU GIVE ME A FAIR TRIAL!

I'M NOTED FOR MY FAIR TRIALS! WE'LL HOLD ONE NOW AT THE OLD BONANZA JUNCTION COURTHOUSE UP THE STREET!



SHORTLY AFTER, AT THE COURTHOUSE ...

COURT'S IN SESSION! THE WITNESS' GUILT IS WRITTEN ALL OVER HIS FACE! WHAT'S THE JURY'S VERDICT?

INNOCENT!

W-WHO SAID THAT?

I DID! THIS COURT'S ON TRIAL, NOT THE DEFENDANT!

IT'S RED FIRE! GET HIM!

IT'S TIME THE PROSECUTORS WERE PROSECUTED! FIRST WE'LL CLEAR THE COURT!

GET OUT OF THE WAY! GIVE ME A SHOT AT HIM!

MOTION DENIED!

SORRY "JUDGE" COURT ISN'T ADJOURNED YET! TELL THE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH! HAVE YOU BEEN JAILING INNOCENT PEOPLE AND STEALING THEIR PROPERTY?

Y-YES! YES! ...LET ME DOWN! ... I ADMIT EVERYTHING!

GOOD! YOU MAY STEP DOWN NOW!

YOU'VE HEARD THE EVIDENCE, GOVERNOR! WHAT'S YOUR DECISION?

CROOKE AND HIS GANG WILL BE PUNISHED! ... AFTER A REGULAR TRIAL, OF COURSE! ARREST THEM MEN!

...G-GOVERNOR?

YES, JENKINS! I SENT FOR HIM! IT'S TIME THE REAL LAW IN THIS TERRITORY MOVED IN ON THE COYOTES WHO MASQUERADE BEHIND JUSTICE!

THANKS FOR GETTING ME DOWN HERE, RED FIRE! JUSTICE WILL BE DONE NOW!

the END!

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MAKE MONEY**

NEW METAL BRILLIANCE

Electroplate SILVER · COPPER · GOLD · CHROME
with Miracle Plating Solutions including

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RHODIUM

**GUARANTEED
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CAN USE IT**



**AUTO CHROME—
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NEW PLATING
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MET-L-COTE — Replates, Restores **CHROME, NICKEL, BRASS, COPPER, STEEL, IRON** and **BRONZE**. **PERFECT FOR CAR CHROME:** Builds up a lasting layer of coating that tremendously lengthens the life of original trim.

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RHODIUM — Newest jewelers metal, said to be hardest metal known. Plates Silver, Gold, Copper and Platinum Jewelry to a beautiful Silver-Finish.

**ORDER THE KITS
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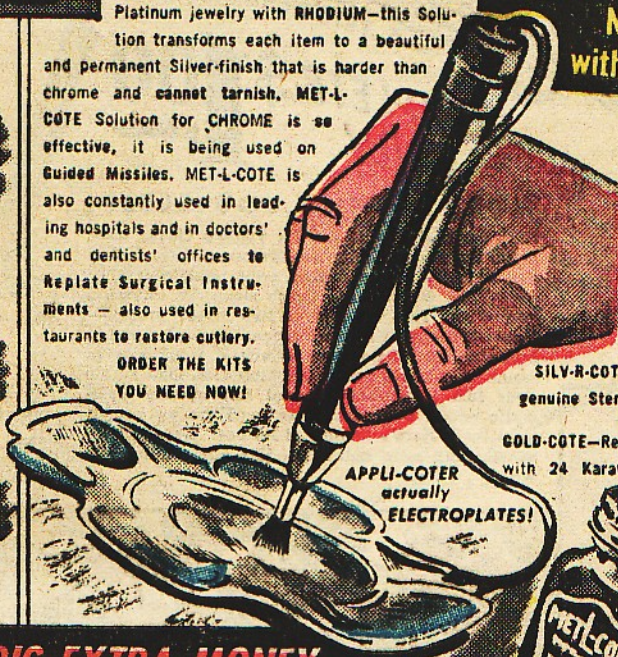
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MET-L-COTE RESTORES



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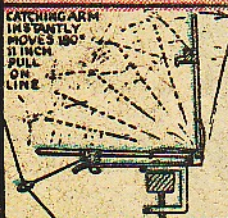
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GUARANTEED
SHUR-HOOKER is guaranteed to catch fish automatically as described or your money back.

The instant fish bites, trigger releases automatically which sets hook in mouth of fish. At the same time, catching arm flies up to make catch secure.



At the same time, catching arm flies up to make catch secure.



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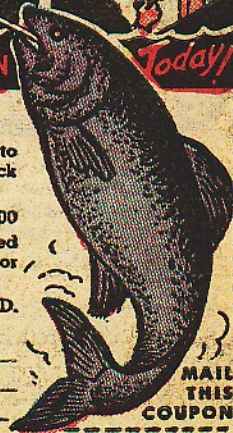
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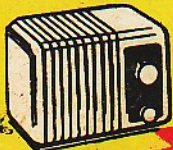
Rush SHUR-HOOKER Automatic Fisherman to me as checked below on 10 day money back guarantee offer.

- 1 for \$1.00, 2 for \$1.79, 6 for \$5.00
- SHIP THIS ORDER POSTPAID. Enclosed is full amount plus only 10¢ postage for 1, 15¢ for 2, 35¢ for 6.
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TOWN _____ STATE _____

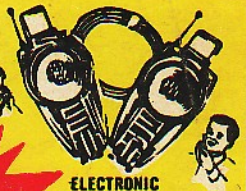


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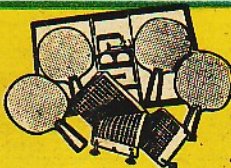


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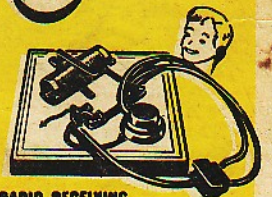
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